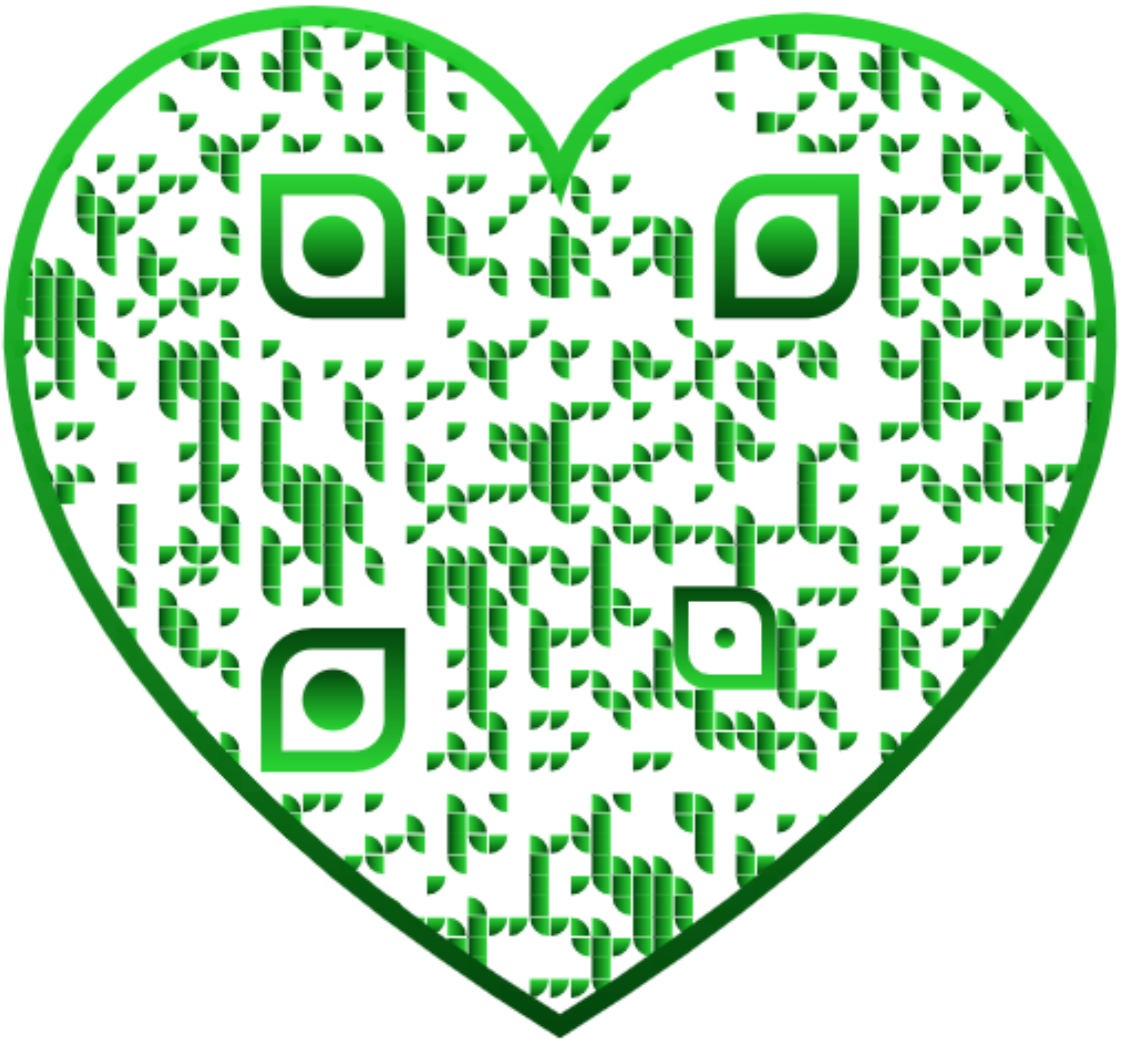
A Field Guide to Megalithic and Other Prehistoric Sites

The Old Stones OF THE NORTH OF ENGLAND & ISLE OF MAN

The Megalithic Portal
Edited by Andy Burnham



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Editor’s Introduction

Andy Burnham, founder and Editor of the Megalithic Portal

This is the first book written by and for prehistoric site enthusiasts. It is a truly collaborative project – just like the Megalithic Portal website itself – that brings together photographs, site information, theories and expertise from the thousands of people that use and post on the site. Focusing on sites from the Neolithic and Bronze Age, this is the most comprehensive guide ever created to the best ancient places to visit in Britain and Ireland, offering an up-to-date look at the archaeology, including many extraordinary discoveries and theories that have been featured on the pages of the Megalithic Portal over the years, as well as a taster of the more mysterious side of things.

Just as the Portal is a collaborative effort, so no one person’s ideas or theories are given more weight in this book. Instead, we celebrate the advances in archaeological practice, theory, dating and analysis that have taken place in the last 25 years. Geophysics, excavation and dating techniques have progressed in this time. There has also been an increased recognition of the importance of accepting non-academic viewpoints, whether from schoolchildren, community volunteers or some of the more leftfield theorists. Alternative ways of exploring and appreciating sites and wider landscapes – previously the realm of a radical fringe – have filtered into the mainstream. Landscape archaeology has in many cases accepted – if not wholeheartedly embraced – phenomenology and multi-sensory approaches, which anyone can try with an open mind and a bit of practice. Advances in technology offer new ways of experiencing sites, for example through augmented reality that merges GIS (geographical information system) landscape models with 3D reconstructions of structures.

Recently, I've been rereading early 1990s editions of *3rd Stone* magazine, styled “for the new antiquarian”, the realm of ley hunters and earth mysteries researchers. Have we moved on in 25 years? Ideas of alignments between sites, of stone shapes matching the landscape, of the importance of colour, sound and experiencing sites in different frames of mind have filtered through to theoretical archaeology, to be discussed openly in papers and at conferences – even if they don’t always get past the gatekeepers of archaeology books and magazines for consumption by the “general public”.

About the Megalithic Portal

The Megalithic Portal is completely independent, with no outside funding save for what we can raise with a bit of advertising on the site, and now through royalties from this book, all of which are being ploughed back into the dayto-day running and further development of the website and our other projects. For the last 10 years we have run as a membership society, similar to any other archaeology society, except with an international reach and outlook. We hold meetings by phone conference and our society members hail from all over Europe, as well as North America, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and beyond.

Ardlair recumbent stone circle Cows represent one of the biggest challenges faced by the megalith enthusiast!

One of the inspirations for the Megalithic Portal was my own experience, in the 1980s and early 1990s, of reading about sites in books or magazine articles with no accurate location details. Even now, articles and papers often don't give proper location information. I started compiling links to sites on the early web in

1996. People began to offer their own information and photos, and a collaborative project was born. The Megalithic Portal was formed in 2001 to continue this process. Much of the site’s content has been created by a group of several hundred dedicated volunteers, but there is a huge range in involvement, from those sending in a couple of photos or sites, to people who have contributed more than 10,000 of these.

About this Book

This book is not just made up of my own favourite sites but has been compiled in a collaborative way, just like the Megalithic Portal itself. Contributions in the form of articles, which appear throughout the book, have come in from scores of writers, from archaeologists to alternative theorists to keen site visitors. Many of Britain and Ireland's top prehistorians have kindly contributed pieces about their research.

I have included opinions from a wide range of people who have original ways to approach ancient sites. While I don't personally go along with all of the ideas proposed, I feel it's important to at least give them an airing and let you, the reader, make up your own mind. Sometimes thinking about a problem in a new and creative way can lead to unexpected breakthroughs and we should not be closed minded to different ways of experiencing ancient sites.

The Megalithic Portal photo gallery contains images from several thousand different contributors. Each photo has a voting button allowing visitors to "like" a specific site. This anonymous voting data provided the basis of a longlist for sites to include in the book, from which a team of Megalithic Portal members selected the final list of sites to include for each region. With the voting data in mind, as well as their local knowledge, the team identified the very "best" sites and gave these a star rating. The voting data also provided the basis for most of the Top 10 and 15 lists you will see throughout the book. After all this, we are confident this is the most comprehensive and democratically selected list of prehistoric sites that has ever been put in a book like this, grouped into regions for convenient visiting and browsing.

Site descriptions have been compiled from the available sources, including excavation reports and blogs from all over the various countries and regions. I must here send thanks to the various online national site databases: Canmore (Historic Environment Scotland), PastScape (Historic England), Coflein (Wales), the National Monuments Service Historic Environment Viewer (Republic of Ireland), the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record, and the Manx Museum for their information and help, which has been invaluable. Some of the online entries are quite complex and hard to interpret so I hope our pithy summaries are helpful. Again, these entries have been checked and amended by Megalithic Portal members from all over the UK and Ireland. The vast majority of pictures in the book have been sent in by Megalithic Portal contributors. People have been so generous with their photos, taking time to look through their personal archives. Images have come from members as far afield

as New Zealand and Japan. It has been tricky to keep track of exactly how many sites we've included – in the spirit of the "countless stones" of folklore, we kept getting different totals. However, I can confidently say we feature over 1,000 sites, with more than 600 with a full profile, plus some 400 "Nearby" listings, covering five countries and not forgetting the Isle of Man!

Each site listing includes an eight-figure Ordnance Survey map reference, and gives the OS paper map sheet the site is found on. For the UK the map sheets are: E – Explorer (orange); OL – Outdoor Leisure (yellow); L – Landranger (pink); and D for the Discoverer maps of Northern Ireland. In the Republic of Ireland, the D is for Discovery Map, whose numbering is shared with the North. For Sat Nav and GPS users we also give latitude and longitude locations for sites.

We have not given full directions to each site as we could fill up a book just with these! The Megalithic Portal (**www.megalithic.co.uk**) has a page for each of the entries in this book (directly linked from the ebooks), where you will find more information. You can search by site name or by map reference using the box at top left of any Megalithic Portal page. We also have a great app that allows you to search for sites by name or on a map. Each page links to various online map services and satellite images. Look on the web pages for the Nearby Sites list to find the more obscure sites that we couldn't fit in. You will also find visitor comments and source references at the bottom of each site page. If you know any sources of information we don't currently list or have any comments about sites featured in this book or on the website, please do submit them.

The Megalithic Portal includes a wide range of ancient sites, so I should mention some that we haven't had space to cover in this book: Iron Age features, such as hill forts, brochs and souterrains; Palaeolithic and Mesolithic find spots and camps; early Christian crosses and other early medieval sites; holy wells and sacred springs; modern stone circles; natural features that may have been revered by or inspired prehistoric people.

As this is a "field guide" we have only included a very few (particularly interesting) sites where there is little or nothing to see on the ground. In fact there are many more lost sites that have been destroyed. The Raunds Area Project in Northamptonshire, for example, found more than 20 vanished mounds, barrows, avenues and causewayed enclosures in the Nene valley, near Wellingborough. We list the ones we know about on the website and welcome photos of the surrounding landscape – even if there are no prehistoric remains still to be seen. Visiting sites that are no longer there, imagining what they were like or how they were used, is true "hardcore" site visiting and for this we salute you!

For reasons of space we have had to limit ourselves to the UK, Isle of Man and Ireland. We haven't included sites on the Channel Islands, as these have more in common with the sites of France, and that's something for another day. We did originally look at including parts of continental Europe but felt it would be impossible to do justice to the many thousands of megalithic sites in countries such as Germany, Denmark, France, Spain and Portugal, and in eastern Europe. There are also many ancient sites in the USA and the rest of the Americas. Not forgetting India, China and … why am I trying to list them all? The Portal features sites from 136 countries – including Liechtenstein, which I recently had to add so one of our contributors could post an entry.

SAFETY

Do not rely purely on modern technology for navigation; always carry a backup map and compass. Know your limits and take care around ancient monuments, which can be dangerous places with unseen holes, cliffs and other pitfalls. Take a torch with you and suitable rations if trekking long distances. Wear appropriate footwear and clothing.

In this ebook we have embedded a link in the title of each megalithic site. These lead directly to the relevant pages on the Megalithic Portal web resource, so if you have an Internet connection you can click on these for more information and photos of each site.

How to Get Involved

We have tried to ensure the information in this book is as accurate as possible, but if you find any errors please do let us know so that we can update future editions. We would also love to hear from you on the website. At the Megalithic Portal we aim to be a sounding board for discussion, as well as a repository for accurate and up-to-date information on specific sites and monuments – and all of this requires constant input from our contributors. We strive to be fair to everyone and create an atmosphere where views can be challenged and disagreed with constructively and respectfully. We have, for example, a Sacred Sites and Megalithic Mysteries forum where we encourage discussion of all manner of experiences and theories relating to ancient sites. Just be respectful to others, even if you disagree with their ideas, and you'll be welcome.

Also on the site is a visit log feature, where you can keep a record of all the ancient sites you have visited, along with your comments and personal ratings as you go. This can be found on the right-hand side of each site entry, along with the link to submit photos of your own.

These days, electronic devices such as smartphones are available to all, and these have changed the way we interact with the outdoors, whether with augmented reality, audio guides, geocaching, Pokémon Go or simply being able to access information while on the move. Academic papers are increasingly put online and even traditional closed journals are getting in on the the act, offering free trial periods or codes to get through their paywalls. Many archaeology site databases are now available online. But better linking of information sources is still badly needed and that's something that we try to do at the Megalithic Portal. Official site databases could be better at curating links, and projects should plan for the long-term availability of their data. I have lost count of the number of projects that forget to renew their web addresses, while entire online archives disappear as researchers lose funding, move on or just go for a redesign. Keeping knowledge free and available amounts to the "archaeology of the internet". But to get off my soapbox, it's amazing that this unprecedented amount of information is available to everyone – it's there to be made use of. And don't forget traditional libraries, archives and just getting out there to do your own research.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Much damage is done accidentally by people who mean no harm. Think twice, and don't do anything which would cause degradation to the monument. For

more details on visiting sites, see the Megalithic Portal Charter, linked at the bottom of any page on the website.

- Check access. Exclusions to the “right to roam” include private gardens and cultivated farmland (unless on footpaths or field margins).
- Get permission to visit sites on private land. This is usually granted if asked for politely – many landowners appreciate their sites as much as we do, but repeated unauthorized visits could lead to access being denied to all.
- Don’t climb on the stones or on rock art. o Don’t try to remove lichen or dig near an ancient site.
- Don’t use wax candles or nightlights inside tombs. You can get very effective LED candles that are much cleaner and safer.
- Don’t light fires close to sites. o Do not move, mark or alter the site in any way, even temporarily.
- Don’t hide caches immediately in or around sites or use metal detectors.
- Any artefacts found should be reported to the local museum or via the Portable Antiquities Scheme (finds.org.uk).
- Do not fly drones around ancient sites without permission – for aerial photography try a kite or long pole instead.
- All in all, please be respectful, keep dogs under control and don’t “hog” the monument for your own rituals/purposes if there are others around.

This book is testament to the passion for prehistoric sites held by so many. Everyone can play a part in adding to our knowledge of ancient sites, and anyone can put time into researching, finding, photographing, monitoring and tidying them. I can only imagine what our stone-raising ancestors would have made of people all over the world communicating and rather obsessing over their efforts with seemingly magical writing devices, 5,000 years into the future! It’s a strange but humbling thought.

For a free extra year’s membership of the Megalithic Portal Society (two years for the price of one), go to: **www.megalithic.co.uk/double**

THE OLD STONES OF THE NORTH OF ENGLAND & ISLE OF MAN

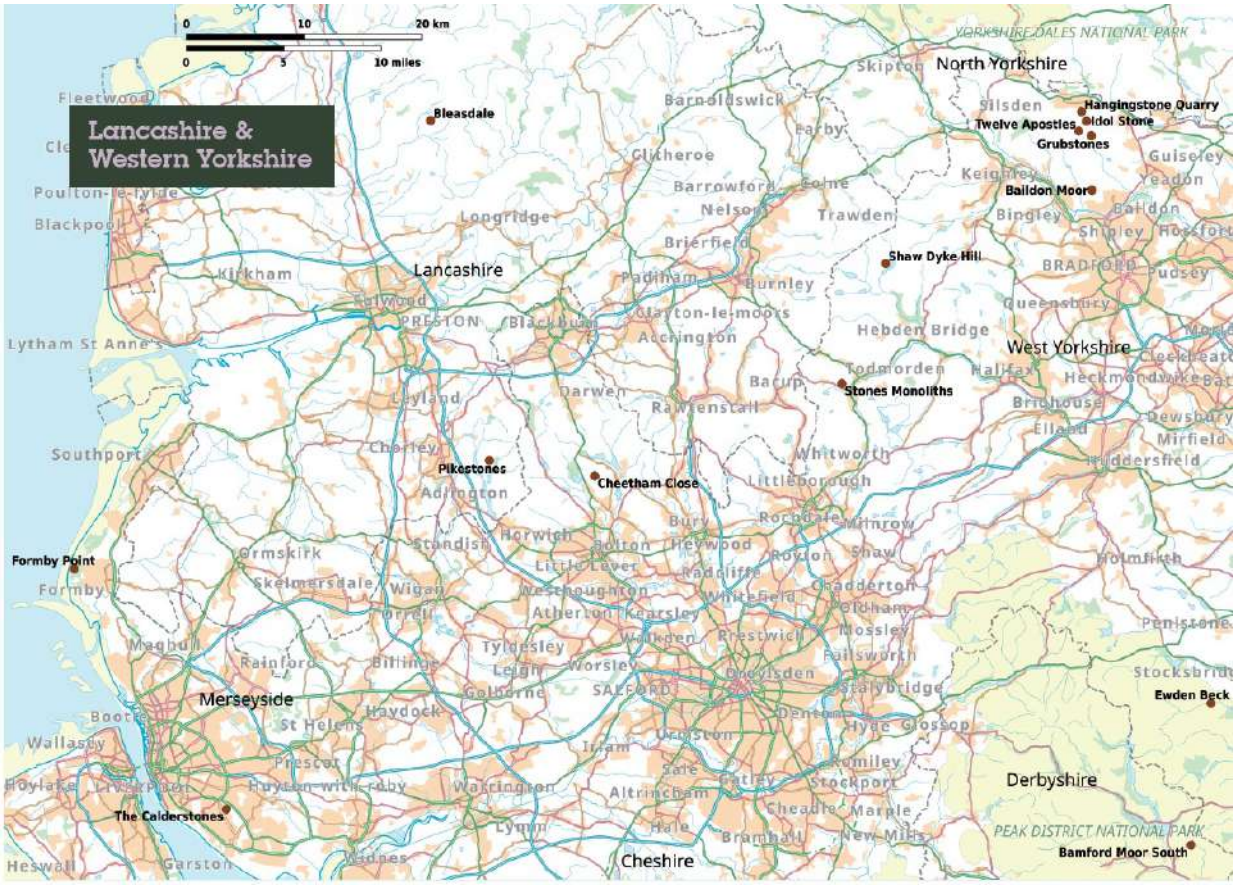
This ebook covers Neolithic and Bronze Age places in Lancashire, Yorkshire, Cumbria and Northumberland, as well as on the Isle of Man. The northern English sites split into two main groups: there are the famous stone circles of Cumbria and the Lake District to the west, and the less well-known but equally inspiring rock art of Northumberland near the east coast. But that's not all – there is also a multitude of rock art, megalithic and earthen sites across Yorkshire, with some hugely impressive standing stones that include our tallest at Rudston, and some magnificent henges, such as the rare triple henge of Thornborough.

The Old Stones of the North of England & Isle of Man is part of a series covering the megalithic and other prehistoric sites of Britain and Ireland. The series is published together as *The Old Stones: A Field Guide to the Megalithic Sites of Britain and Ireland*, available as a book and an ebook.

MAP

NORTH OF ENGLAND

Merseyside



Top 15 Standing Stones in the UK & Ireland (Singles & Pairs)

1. **Rudston Monolith (Yorkshire)** p.169
2. **Maen Llia (Powys)** p.228
3. **Long Meg (Cumbria)** p.183
4. **Aberlemno (Angus)** p.286
5. **The Pipers (nr Merry Maidens) (Cornwall)** p.37
6. **Ardristan (Carlow)** p.375
7. **King Stone (Oxfordshire)** p.117
8. **Penrhos Feilw (Anglesey)** p.248

9. **The Cove, Avebury (Wiltshire)** p.104

10. **Mein Hirion (Anglesey)** p.249

11. **Merrivale Standing Stone (Devon)** p.63

12. **Gardom's Edge (Debyshire)** p.142

13. **Longstone Cove (Wiltshire)** p.107

14. **Kintraw (Argyll)** p.302

15. **Carnasserie Stones (Argyll)** p.302

Merseyside

THE CALDERSTONES Alt Names: **Caldway Stones, Dogger Stones, Rodger Stones** |
Chambered Tomb | Nearest Village: **Allerton (Liverpool)**
Map: **SJ 4040 8761** | Sheets: **E275 L108** | Lat: **53.38195N** | Long: **2.89746W**

Six beautifully decorated stones remain of the chambered tomb that once stood at Allerton. At the time of writing, they can still be visited in Calderstones Park, but the plan is to resite them in purpose-built housing at Calderstones Mansion House, and before then the stones will spend some months in conservation. They are decorated with various motifs, including cup-and-ring marks, cup-marks, spirals, arcs, concentric circles, possibly a bronze halberd and dagger, and – highly unusually for a megalithic tomb – footprints. Detailed photographs of the Calderstones were taken in 2007 by Adam Stanford and George Nash, and can be viewed online at the Megalithic Portal.

Lancashire

FORMBY POINT

Ancient Trackway | Nearest Town: **Formby**
Map: **SD 2750 0800** | Sheets: **E285 L108** | Lat: **53.56358N** | Long: **3.09607W**

At Formby Point, you can follow the footprints of ancient people (as well as those of aurochs, wolf, deer and various birds) that were baked into the silt 3,400–5,100 years ago. Erosion is continually exposing and destroying the marks, and they don't last for long; download a guide to finding them from the National Trust website (linked from the site page on the Megalithic Portal). The Trust also organizes guided walks to see the latest examples.

Photo © Barry Teague

PIKESTONES

Chambered Cairn | Nearest Town: **Chorley**
Map: **SD 6269 1719** | Sheets: **E287 L109** | Lat: **53.64987N** | Long: **2.56592W**

With sweeping views over the Lancashire coast, this badly damaged chambered tomb high on Anglezarke Moor is worth visiting despite the vandalism that has

taken place over the years, including overscribing the rock art, and the carving (and then attempted removal) of a spiral on one of the stones.

Photo © John Miller

"Park at Jepson's Gate and follow the informal path to the left (not the bridleway straight ahead) up over boggy ground to the Pikestones." Vicky Tuckman

CHEETHAM CLOSE

Alt Names: **Chapeltown, Turton Heights Stone Circle** | Nearest Village: **Chapeltown (Greater Manchester)**
Map: **SD 7163 1586** | Sheets: **E287 L109** | Lat: **53.63848N** | Long: **2.43055W**

Photo © John Miller

A ruinous stone circle, once about 18.5 × 12.5m (60 × 40ft) in diameter, with six stones remaining, all broken or fallen and none over 1m (3ft 3in) tall. This is a popular site, as it's easily accessible and the area's only circle, with great views to the north, east and southeast. There's a ring cairn to the south of the circle, and other cairns can be found in the surrounding area. An outlier of the circle, reused as a boundary stone, is known as the Mire Stone. It has recently been suggested that the circle had a portal entrance to the southwest.

BLEASDALE

Timber Circle | Nearest Village: **Chipping**
Map: **SD 5772 4600** | Sheets: **OL41 L102** | Lat: **53.90845N** Long: **2.64511W**

A unique site in a tranquil woodland setting on private land (seek permission). Here, an outer palisade of oak posts encircled a 1.2m (4ft) wide ditch surrounding a burial mound, in which urns and the cremated remains of two people were found. A causewayed entrance to the west was flanked by posts, and 11 large oak posts ringed the grave. It is suggested the outer palisade may have decayed and disappeared before the inner monument was built. After excavation in the late 19th century the post-holes were reset with wooden posts which were in turn replaced with concrete in the 1930s. The urns can be seen in the Harris Museum in Preston.

Photo © Miles Newman

South and West Yorkshire

EWDEN BECK Alt Name: **Broomhead I**

Stone Circle | Nearest Town: **Stocksbridge**
Map: **SK 2381 9664** | Sheets: **OL1 L110** | Lat: **53.4656N** | Long: **1.64296W**

On a terrace above Ewden Beck, this embanked stone circle in south Yorkshire encloses a Bronze Age cremation cemetery. It can be hard to find as only five stones are upright of a possible eight or nine, and none is taller than 0.75m (2½ft). There may have been 14 or 15 stones originally.

STONES MONOLITHS

Standing Stones | Nearest Town: **Todmorden**
Map: **SD 9250 2370** | Sheets: **OL21 L103** | Lat: **53.70966N** | Long: **2.1151W**

Photo © Richard L. Dixon

Although not Scheduled Ancient Monuments, and of doubtful antiquity, these three stones are still worth the visit. The 3.6m (12ft) stone set in a millstone-like base seems to have appeared some time after 1912, its holes suggesting it has spent time as a gatepost. In the field to the west is another stone, of a similar height. The smaller, third stone, 1.3m (4½ft), is in a field further up Stones Lane. Until the 1950s there were two stones in this field; the missing one may be part of the trough built around the spring.

SHAW DYKE HILL

Standing Stone | Nearest Town: **Hebden Bridge**
Map: **SD 9622 3388** | Sheets: **OL21 L103** | Lat: **53.8012N** | Long: **2.05887W**

A leaning standing stone, 1.6m (5ft 2in) tall, with views across the reservoir. According to "...Dr David Shepherd (see page 156)", who has researched the possible astronomical and landscape alignments of megaliths in the South Pennines, this stone may have been a major lunar standstill marker.

Nearby | At SD 9902 3573, 3.2km (2 miles) ENE of Shaw Dyke Hill, just

off the Brontë Footpath on Haworth Moor, is the **Cuckoo Stone**, an interestingly grooved standing stone that's wider than it's tall. A second, smaller stone has been recently erected (or re-erected) close by.

MAP

BAILDON MOOR (DOBRUDDEN STONE) Alt

Name: **Low Plain**
Rock Art | Nearest Village: **Baildon**
Map: **SE 1371 4009** | Sheets: **E288 L104** | Lat: **53.85685N** | Long: **1.79304W**

Baildon Moor is home to more than 40 rock art sites, including cups and rings in a range of sizes. The Dobrudden Stone stands at SE 1371 4009 by the northeast wall at Dobrudden Caravan Park, having been moved from its original location in the 1950s. See the Megalithic Portal for the full site listings and map references for Baildon Moor.

Nearby | At SE 1304 3908, in Baildon, the **Soldier's Trench** is a muchaltered site, which some believe may have been a stone circle later incorporated into an Iron Age settlement. A cup-marked rock is in the bank. The area is known for various UFO sightings!

"Viewshed from here to Ferrybridge and the wolds. Imagine how the fires at these sites would have been visible on a clear night." Dr Olaf

Propped Stones

David Shepherd, an independent prehistorian working in the North of England

The term “propped stone” refers to large boulders that have been elevated, with one or more smaller rocks found placed underneath. They may appear to be natural features – glacial erratics, outcomes of landslip, and so on – but in places where there is no natural process that can account for the feature.

Golden Stones is located at SD 9292 2654, above Todmorden in the South Pennines and remains almost in situ. It is a joint-defined section of a finger of Lower Kinderscout grit that has been pried up and a prop inserted on the extreme edge of the underlying layer.

Another example, the Keld Bank feature, can be found on the west flank of Ingleborough (SD 7476 7725). The boulder appears to have come from the top layer of a post-glacial collapse on a scar 30m (98ft) away. It was halted by the even more precarious-seeming prop.

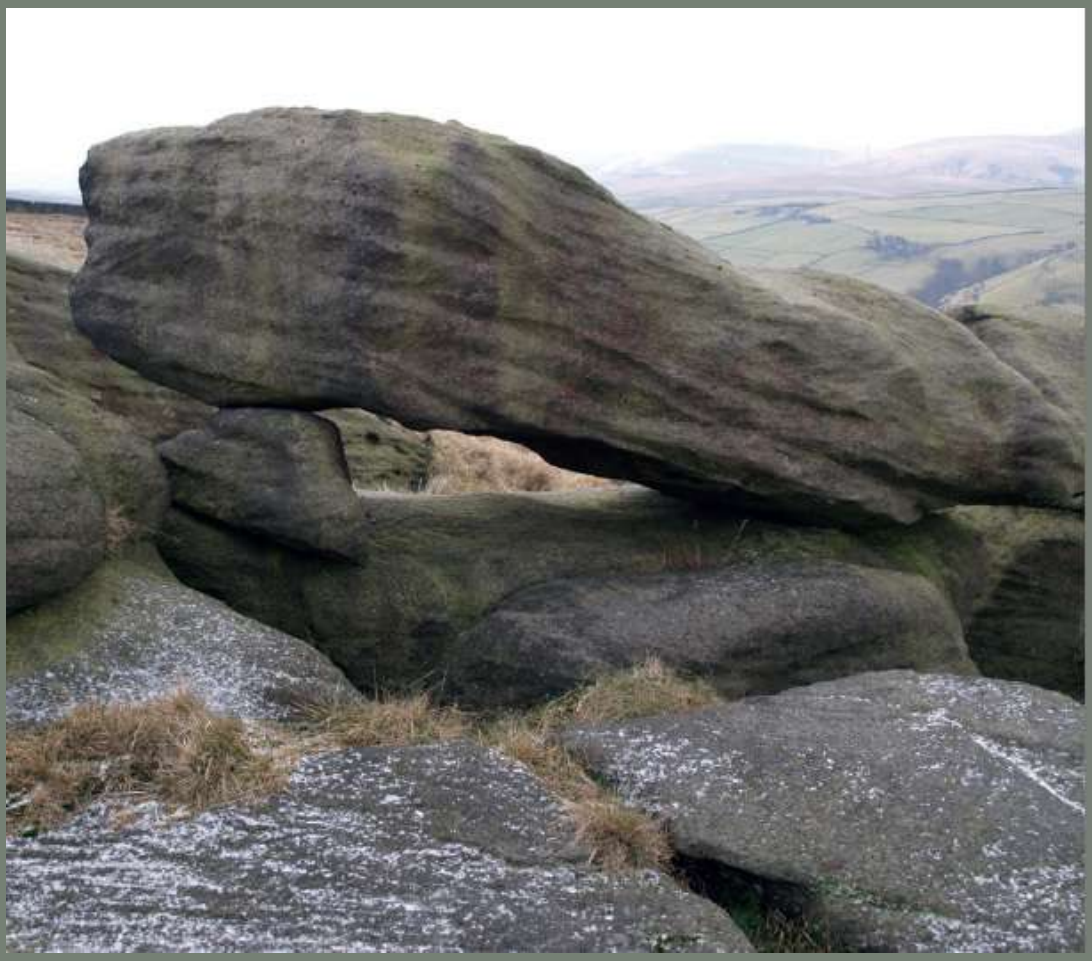
These two examples illustrate that propping stones were apparently placed as precariously as possible, as though elevating a boulder had to be “performed” – demonstrating an unusual degree of organized strength, skill and risk-taking.

It may be that the communal performance of construction was the main point, with the completed feature serving to memorialize the period of special activity. There are many other aspects of interpretation – viewsheds, orientation, size, selective use of rock types, differentiation from natural examples.

My own fieldwork in the South Pennines and the Yorkshire Dales has so far led to the recording of nine propped stones on upland around the headwaters of the Lune, Ribble and Mersey, all rivers draining to the Irish Sea. Fieldwork continues in Ireland, Cumbria, the Dales, the South Pennines and the Dark Peak. Increasingly it seems that propped stones are just one easily recognizable facet of a suite of subtle, nuanced interventions in the natural order of things – landscape features as they were before prehistoric people encountered and interpreted them. There is no dating evidence. All the examples lie in areas showing activity from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age. Thus “proto-dolmens” or “relicts of the

dolmen tradition" are currently both possibilities. The trick will be to deduce what prehistoric peoples' interpretations and motivations might have been.

Shepherd D. 2013. "Propped Stones: The Modification of Natural Features and the Construction of Place." *Time and Mind*, Vol 6 Issue 3 November 2013, 263–86. Bloomsbury.



Golden Stones, Todmorden

MAP

GRUBSTONES Alt Name: **Hawksworth Moor**

Stone Circle | Nearest Town: **Otley**

Map: **SE 1365 4472** | Sheets: **E297 L104** | Lat: **53.89847N** | Long: **1.79375W**

Thought to be either an embanked stone circle or a ring cairn, with the remaining edge-set stones part of a circular bank. The site, on Burley Moor close to the junction of two trails, was damaged in the 19th century by the building of shooting butts, and in the late 20th century by the construction of a rectangular mound rumoured to be intended as an orgone accumulator! (The existence of orgone, a healing esoteric energy, was proposed by William Reich in the 1930s.)

TWELVE APOSTLES

Stone Circle | Nearest Town: **Ilkley**

Map: **SE 1261 4506** | Sheets: **E297 L104** | Lat: **53.901555N** | Long: **1.80957W**

The Twelve Apostles are conveniently close to a main footpath on Ilkley Moor, but this hasn't necessarily done them any favours. By the 1970s all the stones had fallen; they were put back up again in an unauthorized re-erection. Some have since fallen and been re-erected again, and many are now loose. The current 16m (52ft) circle has 12 stones but it's thought there were once 20 stones, plus a central pillar, and a raised embankment. The circle has wonderful panoramic views and is sited close to where two important tracks across the moor cross, one of which at least is considered to be prehistoric. Various astronomical alignments have been suggested, for example to the midsummer sunrise, which is celebrated here each year.

"The stone circle is messed up but this is a great location." Dr Olaf

Photo © Garvin J. Dronfield

IDOL STONE Alt Name: **Hedges (157)**

Rock Art | Nearest Town: **Ilkley** | Map: **SE 1326 4595**
Sheets: **E297 L104** | Lat: **53.90953N** | Long: **1.79963W**

A cupmarked rock, on the main path running between Haystack rock and Green Crag on Ilkley Moor. This is a highly unusual symmetrical arrangment of cups in lines, surrounded by grooves; it was described in the 19th century by J. Romilly Allen as “the most beautiful specimen of prehistoric sculpture”.

Photo © Richard Stroud

HANGINGSTONE QUARRY Alt Name: **Hangingstones**

Rombalds Moor 126
Rock Art | Nearest Town: **Ilkley**
Map: **SE 1281 4675** | Sheets: **E297 L104** | Lat: **53.91673N** | Long: **1.80645W**

At this disused quarry above Ilkley there are two panels of rock art with a large number of cup-and-rings and grooves (and some modern carvings). Some of the carvings are more eroded, having been exposed for longer, whereas others were covered by turf until the 19th century.

Nearby | At SE 0955 4696, on the Dales High Way at Woodhouse Crag, is the **Swastika Stone**, covered with cupmarks, including 10 arranged in a swastika-like design with five curved arms. Ilkley Moor is home to hundreds more rock art panels, which can be found via the Megalithic Portal website and app. Other recommended sites are: **Piper's Crag** (SE 0850 4709), **Badger Stone** (SE 1107 4605) and **Barmishaw Stone** (SE 1119 4642). Middleton Moor, about 8km (5 miles) north of Ilkley town, also has lots of rock art. **Middleton Moor 09 to 19** at SE 1098 5128, is a group of around 10 carvings close to each other. On open access land, managed for grouse, but close to a well-worn track.

“At the foot of the outcrop is a recess known as the ‘Fairies Parlour’ or ‘Fairies Kirk’. In legend, the Saxons attempted to build a church nearby, only to find each morning that the building stones had been moved away further down the hill. After a few days of this, they gave up and built the church down in the valley.” Andy Hemingway

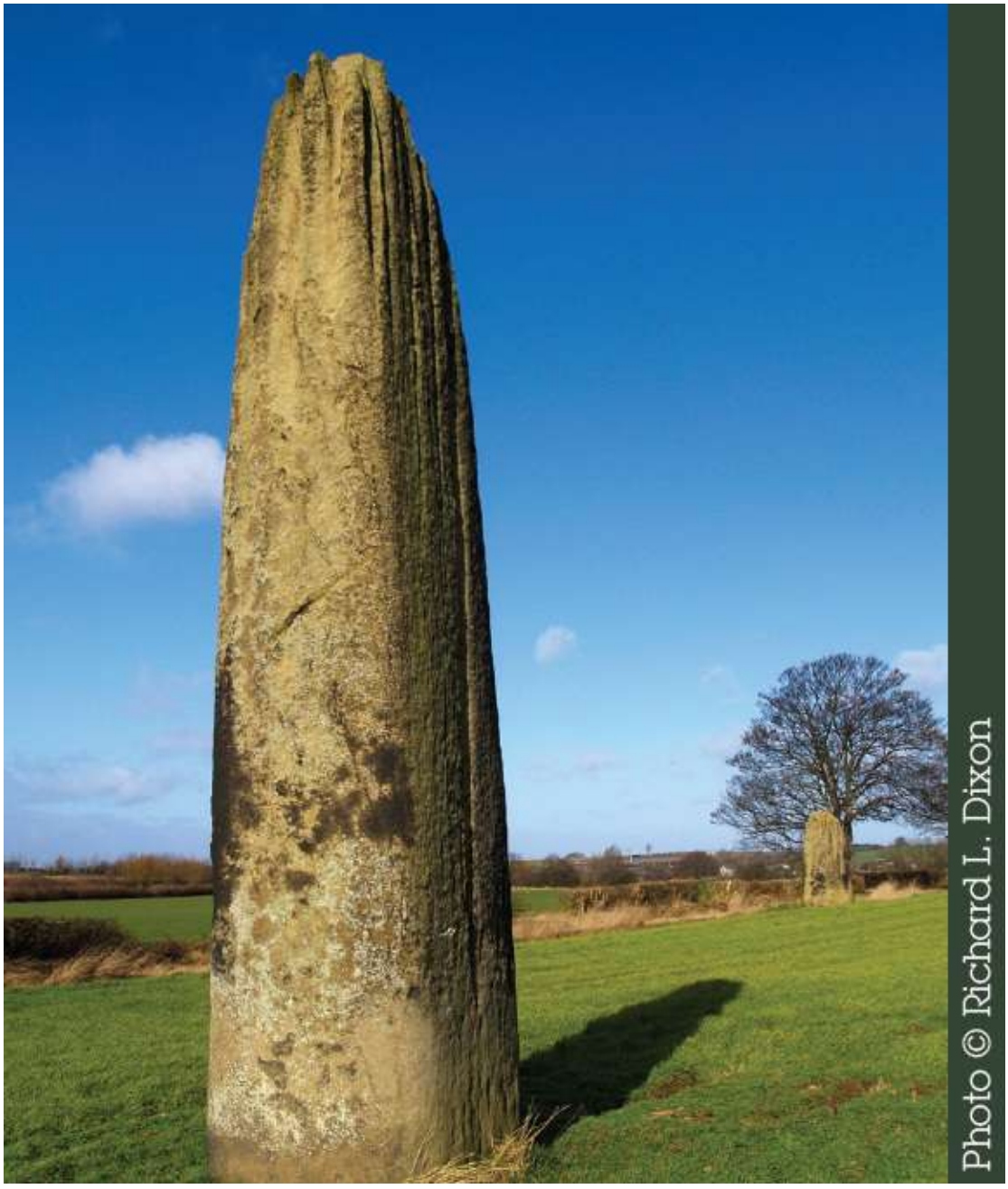
North and East Yorkshire

DEVIL’S ARROWS

Alt Names: **Three Grey Hounds, Three Sisters, The Devil’s Bolts**
Stone Row | Nearest Town: **Boroughbridge**
Map: **SE 3907 6659** | Sheets: **L99 E299** | Lat: **54.09373N** | Long: **1.40412W**

Three massive stones remain in this dramatic stone row 174m (570ft) long, the stones ranging between 5.5m (18ft) and 6.8m (22ft 3in), with a further 1.5m (5ft) of each stone hidden below ground. The gritstone has weathered into grooves at the top of the stones, giving them a characterful appearance. It is thought the central stone was one of a pair, and there may have been a total of five stones here originally, with one stone broken up to build a bridge *c*. 1600. The very close proximity of the A1(M) indicates the importance of this glacial ridge as an ancient north–south transport link.

“Legend has it these stones were bolts thrown by an irate Devil, aiming for the Christian settlement at Aldborough!” David Raven



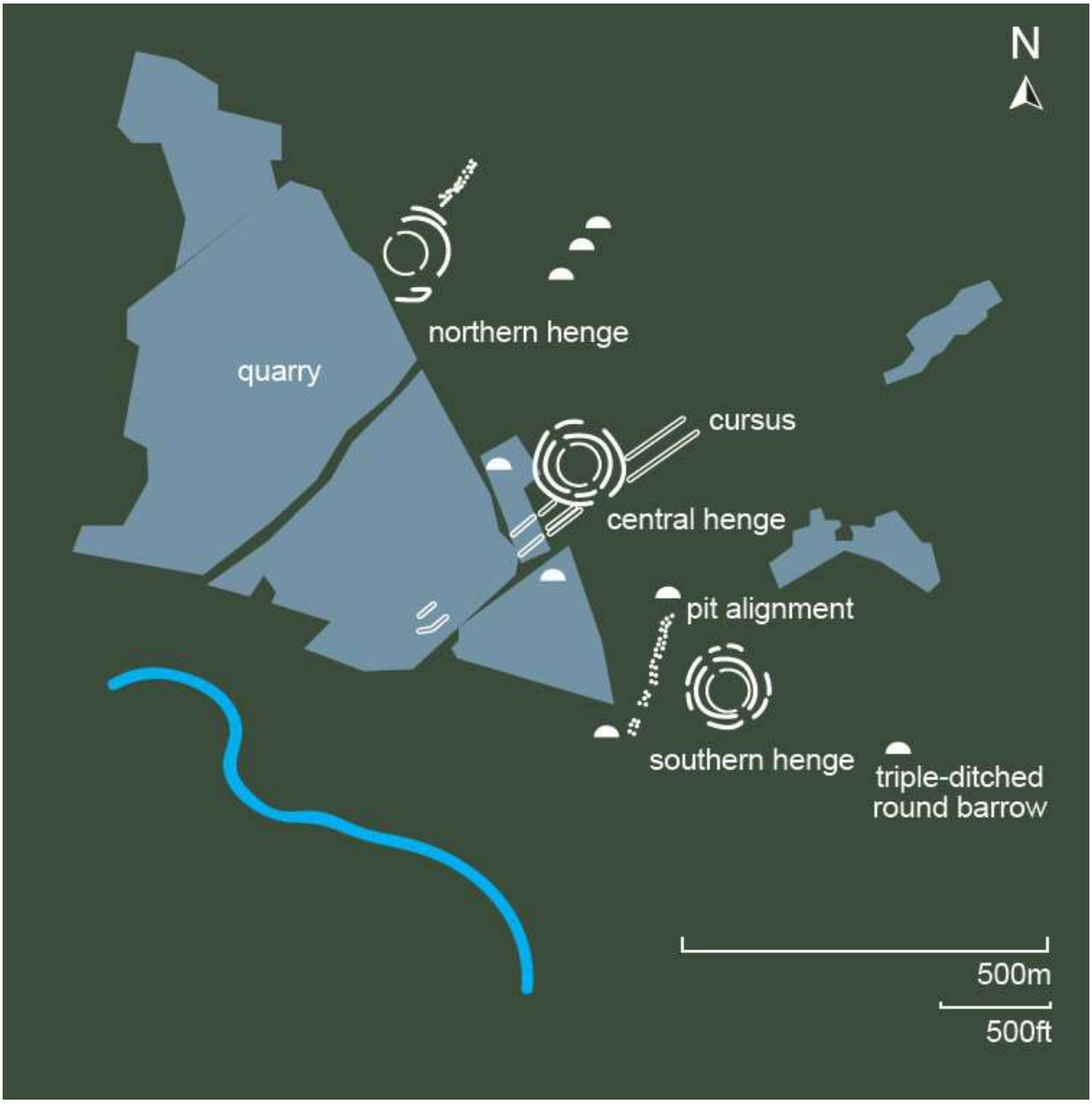
MAP

THORNBOROUGH

Earthwork Complex | Nearest Village: **Thornborough**

Map: **SE 2851 7945** | Sheets: **E298 L99** | Lat: **54.21N** | Long: **1.56436W**

There are six huge henges sited within 12km (7½ miles) of each other along the River Ure, all with the same design. Three of them cluster together in a single ceremonial complex at Thornborough, part of an archaeological landscape of international importance that includes, as well as the rare triple-henge formation, a cursus, a barrow with three concentric ditches, enclosures, various rows of single or double pits and many later Bronze Age barrows. The triple-ditched barrow and the cursus predate the henges, indicating that the complex developed and increased in importance over time. Fieldwork has produced a large number of flint artefacts from the Mesolithic onward. Although the site has been badly disturbed by quarrying, and the henges have also suffered damage from ploughing, these are still spectacular landscape features. The series of henge complexes of which Thornborough is part runs from Catterick to Ferrybridge on the Humber and on to the Trent and the long ridge to Maxey and Etton; it is thought that it may have played a role akin to that of an important shrine on a pilgrimage route.



TRIPLE HENGES

It has been suggested that the positioning of the three Thornborough henges represents the stars of Orion's Belt; various other archaeoastronomical alignments have been put forward, including that the southern openings in all three henges framed the rising of Sirius (see page 165). The massive henges, ranging in size from 238–244m (780–800ft), are aligned roughly northwest–southeast, each with a bank and an inner and an outer ditch and two entrances. Gypsum deposits have been found, suggesting that the earthworks were deliberately whitened. They survive today as earthworks and cropmarks. The

northernmost henge is in the best condition, but the central henge is the most dramatic and easiest to walk around.

TRIPLE-DITCHED ROUND BARROW

The oldest structure at Thornborough is probably the triple-ditched round barrow, which has been dated to 3790–3650BC. This would make the feature older than the three henges – the date is very early for a barrow. The fact that no Bronze Age burials seem to have been added may indicate that the triple-ditched barrow was considered too important to tamper with. Further barrows were built around the henges during the Bronze Age.

MAP

CURSUS

Visible as a cropmark and aligned northeast–southwest, the cursus is about 1.6km (1 mile) long and predates the henges, running partly beneath the central henge and across the henge axis.

AVENUE

A 350m (1,148ft) double pit avenue, associated with a barrow, runs NNE–SSW from between the central and southern henges toward the River Ure.

Photo © Historic England Archive

Thornborough Archaeoastronomy

Andy Burnham, founder and Editor of the Megalithic Portal

Anyone standing within the henges at Thornborough would have had their view of the surrounding landscape obscured by the great henge banks. It seems natural, therefore, that the focus would shift to the sky. To investigate possible astronomical links, archaeologist and Thornborough Henges specialist Jan Harding and his team chose what they considered to be the six most likely viewpoints for making astronomical observations within the complex: the entrances of each of the three henges, which create a natural frame looking along the cursus, and along the timber avenue, in each direction; and along the axis of the two large pits or post-holes that align on the tripleditched barrow to the southeast.

Using the astronomy app SkyMap Pro, the team created images of the night sky from these viewpoints for dates every 500 years from 3500 to 1500BC. They designed a 3D model of the Thornborough complex, and "projected" the images of the sky on to a geo-dome over this simulated landscape. The rising or setting of a total of 40 stars was found to be visible from the chosen viewpoints between 3500 and 1500BC, and the winter solstice sunrise could also be seen.

Using the model, the archaeologists were able to position themselves at the selected viewpoints to consider the sky through the reconstructed monuments, taking into account the horizons and woodland cover at the time. In this way, they narrowed down the various star events to determine which were likely to have been most significant.

It was apparent that the southern entrances of all three henges framed the winter solstices at around 3000BC. Also, the eastern end of the cursus was aligned on the risings of stars Mirfax and Pollux between 3500 and 3000BC, and the western end framed the settings of seven stars, including the three of Orion's Belt.

Given the width of the henges' entrances, there were 12 stars rising and 10 setting at the entrance "windows" between 3000 and 2000BC. One of these was Sirius, within the southern entrance for each of the three henges at 3000BC.

The archaeologists considered it most significant that the rise of Orion's Belt aligned with the two large pits or post-holes, but only in the

first half of the third millennium BC. when it is likely the earlier cursus had been replaced by the new henge complex.

Orion's Belt rises in the direction of the Yorkshire Wolds, where many stone axes have been found, and where many of the worshippers probably lived. It first becomes visible at harvest time, and is seen throughout the winter until spring. This all suggests Orion's Belt as the most significant alignment – in what Harding calls "the close relationship between skyscape and life cycles, a connection anchored by the monuments themselves".

It seems that the glistening gypsum that coated the henge banks, perhaps representing and reflecting the moon, was prepared in nearby pits. This process may also have contributed to the symbolic power of this important location.

For more information see: Harding, J., Johnston, B. and Goodrick, G. 2006. "Neolithic Cosmology and the Monument Complex of Thornborough, North Yorkshire". ***Archaeoastronomy*** **20**

Neolithic Sites in the Landscape

Cathryn Iliffe, researcher into archaeopsychology (mental tools and ancient constructions)

A series of massive henges, cursuses and monoliths can be found in Yorkshire and Northumberland. The earthworks and stones sit in valleys, overlooked by rock art on higher ground. It is likely that sites were located to be intervisible at long distances.

There are six large henges in the Ure valley, flanked to the west by the hills of the Dales and the North York Moors to the east – the triple henges at Thornborough (see page 163), plus Hutton Moor, Nunwick and Cana Barn. Two more can be found at Newton Kyme and Ferrybridge. All about 270m (885ft) diameter, the henges were surfaced with gleaming white gypsum. Other henges, timber circles, mounds and the massive standing stones of the Devil's Arrows, mark all the river crossings of the Humber tributaries, from Catterick to the Don.

The Rudston Monolith (see page 169) stands at a sharp bend in the Gypsey Race, where the stream transforms into an all-year river. There are four cursuses splaying out from the monolith, running roughly north–south, east– west, and out to the SSW. Several henges mark the course of the Gypsey Race westward. The Devil's Arrows, the round barrow at Duggleby (see page 168) and Rudston are all on the same latitude, suggesting long-distance cardinal landscape mapping.

In Northumberland, the Maelmin henges, cursuses and timber circles (see page 194) lie in a landscape very similar to the Ure valley monuments. The Doddington rock art (see page 195) echoes that on the hills of Ilkley and Silsden further south, the North York Moors and Lordenshaws to the north.

The construction of these sites, which would have required great investment in terms of time and effort, gives an insight into the expansive mindset of the builders and their desire to manipulate the landscape.

WEST AGRA

Rock Art | Nearest Village: **Colsterdale**
Map: **SE 1424 8175** | Sheets: **E302 L99** | Lat: **54.23126N** | Long: **1.78305W**

Although known unofficially for years, the rock art here was not formally recorded until 2003. There are cup-marks visible on about 10 rocks. Look out for the two more unusual carvings as well, including one resembling a stylized human figure. On private land, as is the Agra Moor stone (below).

Nearby | At SE 1350 8244, about 1km (0.6 miles) WNW of West Agra rock art and up on the moors above Brown Beck Crags, is the 1.3m (4½ft) **Agra Moor** (or Brown Beck) standing stone. Spectacular views overlooking the confluence of Birk Gill and Brown Beck.

"Stunning motifs, which can be hidden by trees and bracken." Anne Tate

YOCKENTHWAITE

Ring Cairn | Nearest Town: **Grassington**
Map: **SD 8997 7937** | Sheets: **OL30 L98** | Lat: **54.20996N** | Long: **2.15528W**

This site has been described as a stone circle but the 20 limestone kerb stones look to be all that's left of a ring cairn about 7 × 6.5m (23 × 21ft) in diameter. Four further stones form an outer kerb to the northwest. The tallest stone is 1.2m (4ft), with most about 0.4m (1ft 3in). A possible outlier stands 6.5m (21ft) to the southeast, and there are a couple of similar boulders to the west that may or may not be associated with the remains of the circle.

Photo © Richard L. Dixon

CASTLE DYKES

Henge | Nearest Village: **Thoralby**
Map: **SD 9823 8729** | Sheets: **OL30 L98** | Lat: **54.28123N** | Long: **2.02867W**

A well-preserved henge, with three entrances – only the eastern, causewayed entrance is thought to be original. It's 75m (246ft) in diameter at the widest point, and about 2m (6½ft) from the top of the bank to the base of the 10.5m (34ft 5in) wide ditch. There's a large stone on the inside slope of the bank to the

southeast and there are reports of other stones having once stood at the site, now long gone. After Town Head Farm, follow the Flout Moor Lane track for about 1.6km (1 mile) and the henge is about 100m (328ft) off to the left (south) through a gate.

ACKLAM WOLD

Barrow Cemetery | Nearest Village: **Acklam**
Map: **SE 8027 6169** | Sheets: **E300 L100** | Lat: **54.04496N** | Long: **0.7756W**

Partly excavated in 1849, this is a large barrow cemetery with 17 round barrows, some altered or levelled by farming activities but others visible as mounds. Grave goods found here included a Beaker pot, jet and amber buttons and rings, and bronze daggers. Linear earthworks are thought to be Iron Age, and further finds, including an ornament for a horse's head, and gold necklaces, may be Iron or Bronze Age. One of the burials included what is thought to be a "strike-a-light" kit: a strike-stone of iron pyrites or marcasite and a flint striker. Archaeologists Anne Teather and Andrew Chamberlain have identified 52 probable examples of strike-a-lights in prehistoric burials across mainland Britain.

DUGGLEBY HOWE

Round Barrow | Nearest Village: **Duggleby**
Map: **SE 8804 6688** | Sheets: **E300 L101** | Lat: **54.0903N** | Long: **0.65547W**

A rare Neolithic round barrow, 6m (20ft) high and 38m (124ft 8in) in diameter so very visible in the landscape. Aerial photography revealed a large encircling causewayed ditch 370m (1214ft) in diameter, open to the south. The barrow stands at the source of the winterbourne river Gypsey Race. The site was developed over more than a millennium, with the original grave pit dating to 3600–3500BC, the first mound of turf and topsoil capped by a layer of chalk grit below a layer of clay dating to 2900–2800BC, and the final chalk-dug ditch and mound dating to 2500–2400BC.

The Gypsey Race

Chris Collyer, author of www.stone-circles.org.uk

The Gypsey Race is a winterbourne or intermittent stream that flows through the Great Wold Valley. Flowing both above and below ground, suddenly changing direction as well as disappearing in some years, the stream has been a source of wonder for hundreds of years. The number of monuments that follow its course is evidence for its significance to the prehistoric population of the Wolds. These include a now-destroyed henge close to Burton Fleming, two large round barrows and the Rudston Monolith. The latter stands close to a bend in the Gypsey Race, and there are also four cursus monuments that seem to be focused on, or around, this kink in the stream. Evidence of occupation continues in later prehistory with the Bronze Age Argham Dyke earthwork and the massive Dane's Dyke.

The Mesolithic hunting camp and ritual site of Star Carr lies some way north of the Gypsey Race, south of Scarborough. It once stood on the shores of the now-vanished Lake Pickering. It's clear that the presence of water was important to the people of this region.

MAP

RUDSTON MONOLITH

Standing Stone | Nearest Village: **Rudston**
Map: **TA 0980 6774** | Sheets: **E301 L101** | Lat: **54.09385N** | Long: **0.32246W**

Legend tells how the Devil threw this massive stone at All Saints Church and missed, leaving it sticking out of the churchyard. Famously the tallest standing stone in Britain, it is just under 8m (26ft) in height and 5m (16ft) in circumference. Antiquarian investigation in the 18th century indicated the stone extends underground for a further 8m (26ft), but this has been disputed. A jaunty

lead cap, deplored by many, protects the broken top. The stone is thought to have been brought here from Cayton Bay or Cornelian Bay, some 16km (9 miles) to the north.

“There is a smaller gritstone in the nearby cemetery, along with a slab cist grave.” Pat O’Halloran

Markings on its surface have been interpreted as cup-and-rings, and more contentiously as a star map. Nearby are four cursuses, romantically named A, B, C and D. Each is many hundreds of metres long, but hard to spot in the modern landscape other than as cropmarks. The stone may have been erected at the termination of Cursus B. It seems this area was very significant to our Neolithic ancestors, although the almost complete lack of finds means understanding remains elusive.

Photo © Richard L. Dixon

WILLY HOWE

Round Barrow | Nearest Village: **Wold Newton**
Map: **TA 0616 7235** | Sheets: **E301 L101** | Lat: **54.13603N** | Long: **0.37663W**

Just south of the Gypsey Race, this huge barrow, the second largest in East Yorkshire, is 7.5m (25ft) high and 36.5m (119ft) across. The 20m (66ft) wide ditch surrounding the barrow is visible as a surface depression.

Nearby | Just south of Wold Newton village and the Burton Fleming road is the **Wold Newton** barrow (TA 0452 7287), one of the four largest in Yorkshire, but extensively damaged by ploughing. What you see today is a partial reconstruction after the 1894 excavation.

NAB RIDGE Alt Name: **Bride Stones**

Round Barrow | Nearest Town: **Helmsley**
Map: **SE 5756 9790** | Sheets: **OL26 L100** | Lat: **54.37337N** | Long: **1.11638W**

An interesting example of how sites can be misinterpreted, this round barrow has been variously identified as a stone circle and a decayed henge monument. The remaining stones appear to have formed part of a kerb, standing in a circular 12m (39ft) bank. The tallest stone is about 0.9m (3ft) high. Marked as “Bride Stones” on the OS map, it’s one of several sites with this name.

“Reached after a long climb up the rigg – the view is worth it!” Pat O’Halloran

Photo © John D, Hunter

MAP

HIGH AND LOW BRIDESTONES

Stone Circles & Stone Row | Nearest Village: **Grosmont**
Map: **NZ 8500 0463** | Sheets: **OL27 L94** | Lat: **54.42999N** | Long: **0.69124W**

HIGH BRIDESTONES

Just one stone (about 2m/7ft tall) remains upright at the High Bridestones, which may be the remains of two four-poster stone circles. Described by Aubrey Burl as a “megalithic disaster”, the site has a striking moorland setting, described as bleak by some. In 1817, Reverend George Young recorded that six stones were standing, while 11 had been upright just a few years before.

Photo © Jim Champion

LOW BRIDESTONES

At NZ 8454 0486, about 500m (1,640ft) WNW of the High Bridestones, is the short Low Bridestones row. These small stones can be hard to find when the grass is long. There are more stones around 100m (328ft) south of this location, of uncertain date, which may be later prehistoric field walls.

Yorkshire

DRUIDS' TEMPLE Alt Names: **Birkrigg Common, Sunbrick**

Stone Circle | Nearest Village: **Sunbrick**
Map: **SD 2923 7396** | Sheets: **OL6 L96** | Lat: **54.15655N** | Long: **3.08519W**

A double stone circle in a peaceful setting on Birkrigg Common in Cumbria with views over Morecambe Bay. The 9m (30ft) inner ring has 10 surviving stones and the 26m (85ft) outer ring has 15. Excavation revealed five cremations under a cobbled pavement within the inner ring, one in an inverted, patterned urn.

Photo © Richard L. Dixon

Nearby | At SD 2627 7442, 3km (just under 2 miles) west of the Druids' Temple, is **Great Urswick** burial chamber. It can be hard to distinguish from the surrounding natural boulders.

LACRA

Megalithic Complex | Nearest Village: **Kirksanton**
Map: **SD 1498 8133** | Sheets: **OL6 L96** | Lat: **54.22057N** | Long: **3.30538W**

At Lacra Bank, on a natural terrace on the fell to the northeast of Kirksanton, there are four stone circles as well as one or two stone rows. The natural boulders here make it a little tricky to identify these monuments at first, but it becomes easier as you walk around and get used to the features while you enjoy the fabulous views over the sea (you can see the Isle of Man on a clear day).

LACRA A (NORTHWEST CIRCLE)

At SD 1498 8133, this is the first circle reached after turning right along the track at the ruined farmhouse. It's not easy to make out. Five stones remain of a 15.7m (52ft) ring, with two more "possibles" pushed aside, perhaps, by a farm track that clips the edge of the circle to the north.

LACRA B (SOUTH CIRCLE)

This 14.6m (48ft) circle is the best preserved of Lacra's monuments. It can be found at SD 1492 8098, close to the edge of the terrace, 352m (1,155ft) SSW of Lacra A. There were probably 11 stones here originally, but only six remain. An inner ring enclosed a central mound 9.7m (32ft) across with a burial, probably a secondary rather than primary one.

Top 10 Sites in the UK for Getting Away from It All

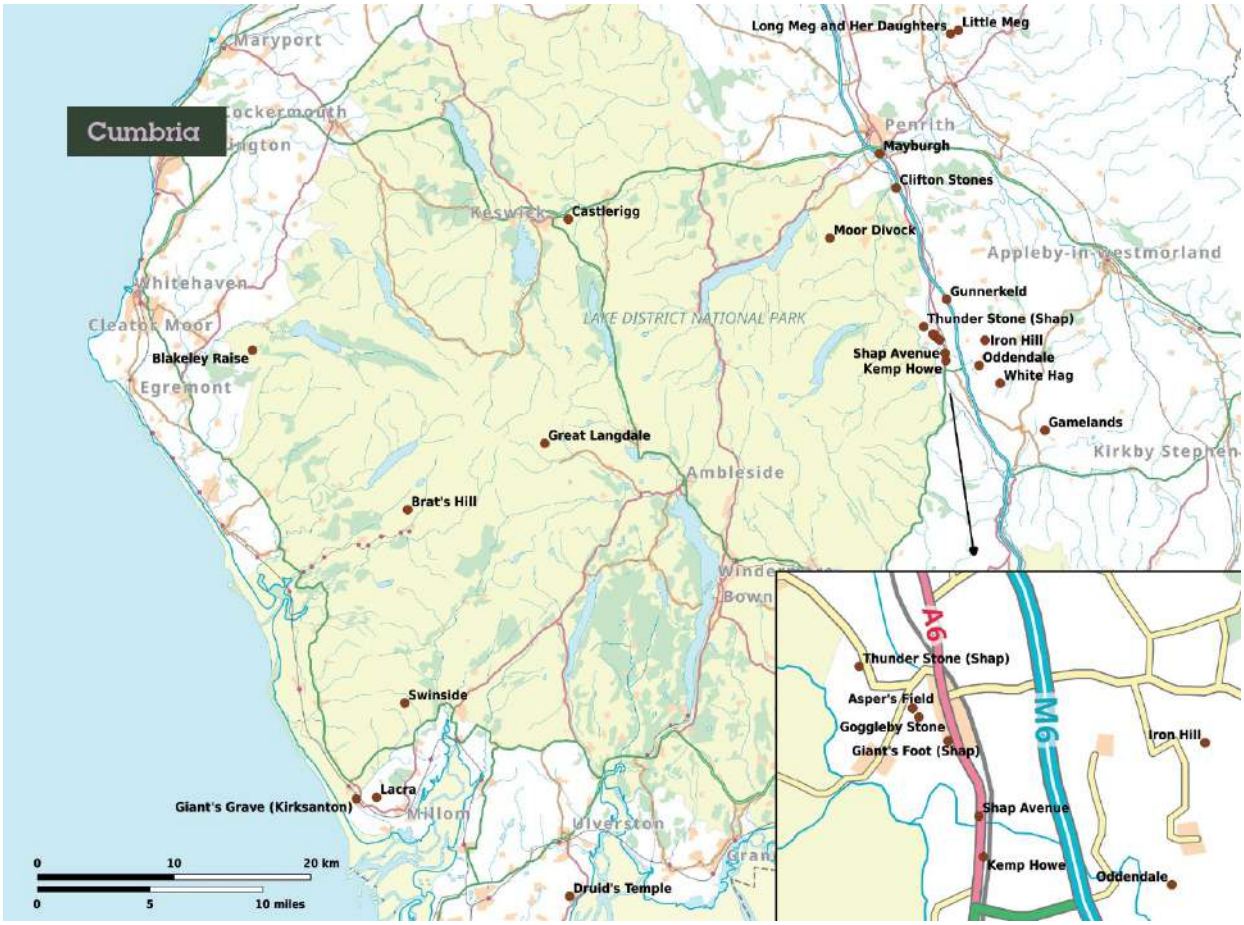
1. **Bryn Cader Faner (Gwynedd)** p.239
2. **Upper Erme (Devon)** p.56
3. **Leskernick (Cornwall)** p.48
4. **Down Tor (Devon)** p.60
5. **Fan Foel (Carmarthenshire)** p.211
6. **Brat's Hill (Cumbria)** p.174

7. **Gardom’s Edge (Derbyshire)** p.142

8. **Loch Seaforth (Harris)** p.337

9. **Clach Mhic Mhios (Highland)** p.327

10. **Holm of Papa Westray South** p.353

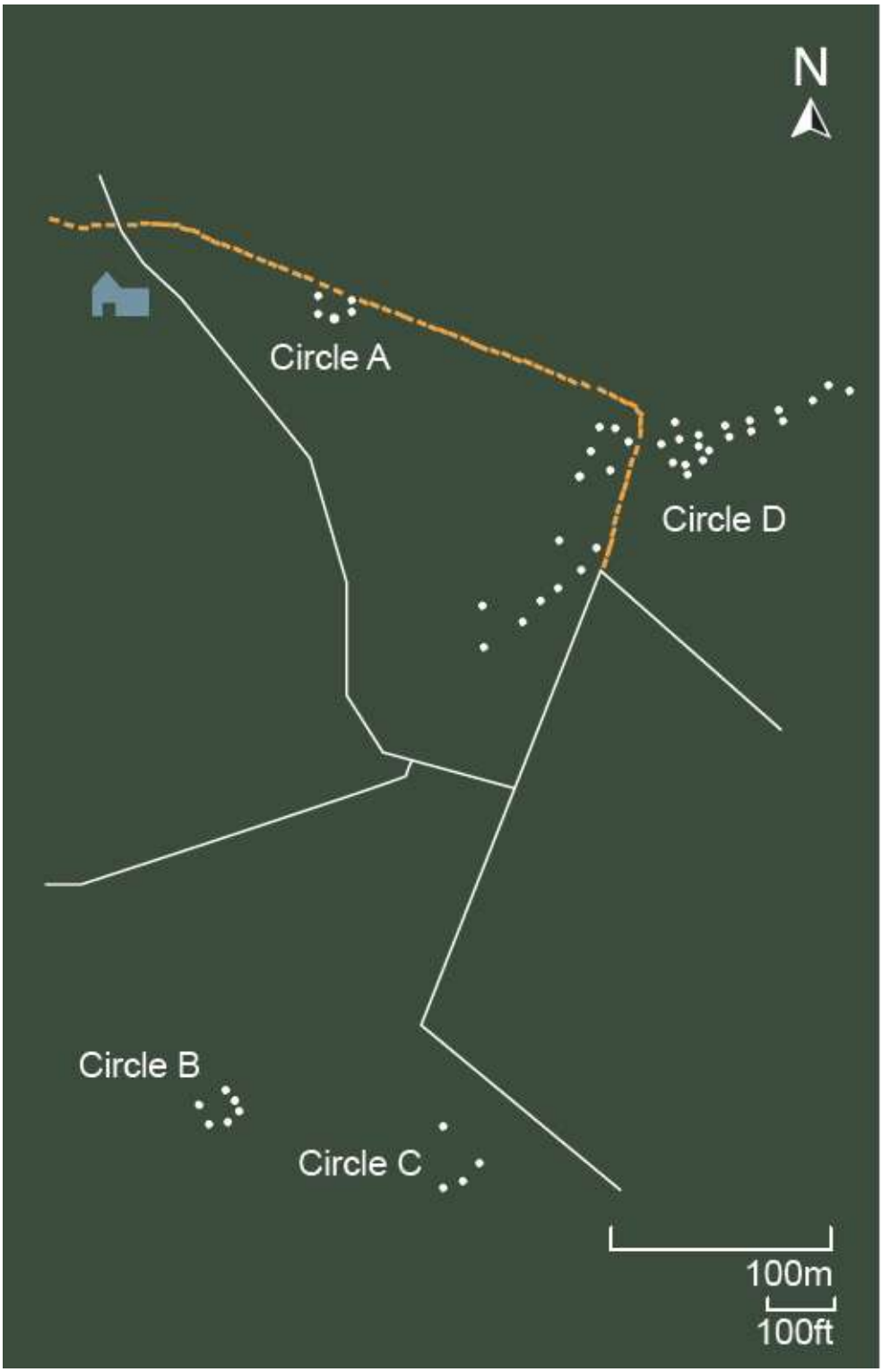


LACRA C (NORTHEAST CIRCLE)

At SD 1501 8097, the three fallen stones of Lacra C, 91m (298ft) east of Lacra B, are identified as the remains of a 21m (70ft) circle by some and as a stone row by others.

LACRA D (WEST CIRCLE)

At SD 1509 8121, 161m (528ft) ESE of Lacra A, the Lacra D circle is around 18× 15.5m (60 × 51ft) in diameter, with a large flat central stone, 1.8 × 2.4m (6 × 8ft). The six or seven visible stones in the ring have all fallen and some barely poke out of the ground. In 1947 an urn was dug up by the northernmost stone; it is now on display at the Dock Museum in Barrow-in-Furness (where they have a great collection of Langdale axes). It’s possible that there was an outer ring of stones, but if so only four remain to the southeast.



AVENUES I AND II

Running ENE from Lacra D is a row of 10 or 11 stones, which extends for

around 46m (151ft). Some pairing of stones is evident. Some 35m (114ft) southwest of Lacra D, there is also said to be a row running WSW, identified in the 1947 excavation as an 80m (262ft) avenue, although these may just be naturally distributed boulders.

GIANT'S GRAVE (KIRKSANTON) Alt Names: **Kirksanton, Portals of Eden**

Standing Stones | Nearest Village: **Kirksanton**
Map: **SD 1361 8110** | Sheets: **OL6 L96** | Lat: **54.21834N** | Long: **3.32629W**

Black Combe dominates the landscape beyond this splendid pair of standing stones, 3m and 2.4m (10ft and 8ft) tall respectively, considered to be the remains of a cairn circle. There's a cup-mark on each stone. It's thought there was a lake immediately to the north of the stones at the time they were erected. Records from the 18th century describe the stones standing on a barrow (of which there is now no evidence) and there are also reports of other stones standing with them.

Photo © Jim Appleton

SWINSIDE Alt Name: **Sunkenkirk**

Stone Circle | Nearest Town: **Broughton-in-Furness**

Map: **SD 1716 8817** | Sheets: **OL6 L96** | Lat: **54.28242N** | Long: **3.2739W**

Photo © Eric Grindle

This wonderful and well-preserved circle of porphyritic slate is in a beautiful setting high on remote Swinside Fell, with only the nearby farm and the distant road offering any sign of modernity. In fine weather, mist, snow or rain, it's always atmospheric and well worth the walk (some of which is fairly steep). The 27m (88ft) circle has 55 closely set stones (32 still standing), which rise to 2.3m (7½ft). An apparent entrance at the southeast is marked by a wide gap and two stones outside the ring, as at Long Meg and Her Daughters (see page 183). Aubrey Burl points out that from the centre of the circle, there is an alignment across the line of these two portal stones to the midwinter sunrise. A local legend tells that attempts to build a church on the site were foiled by the Devil, who destroyed every night what had been built during the day – hence the name Sunkenkirk. As at many sites, the stones are said to be impossible to count.

BRAT'S HILL Alt Names: **Eskdale, Burnmoor**

Stone Circle | Nearest Town: **Ravenglass**

Map: **NY 1737 0234** | Sheets: **OL6 L90** | Lat: **54.40977N** | Long: **3.27461W**

Up on boggy Burnmoor there are up to five stone circles (the position of two of them is debatable) as well as a cairnfield with, according to some estimates, over 400 cairns. The views are incredible, encompassing Harter Fell, Bowfell and the Scafell range, and down to the sea. Brat's Hill, overlooked by a striking natural rock outcrop, is the largest circle, about 30m (98ft), with *c*. 40 boulder-like stones. It contains five cairns, two of which were opened in the 19th century, revealing fragments of antlers and burnt bones. A pleasant way to get here is via

the narrow-gauge Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway, getting off at Dalegarth for Boot station. Then it is an approximately 4km (2½ mile) walk.

Nearby | At NY 1730 0241, about 100m (328) WNW of Brat's Hill, is the 16m (55ft) **White Moss NE** stone circle, with around 11 stones and a central cairn, while **White Moss SW** (a similar size, with 12 to 14 stones and a central cairn, in less good condition) is at NY 1725 0239, a further 55m (180ft) WSW. **Low Longrigg SW** circle is said to be 306m (1,004ft) NNW of White Moss NE, with **Low Longrigg NE** 100m (328) further NNW, but the Low Longrigg circles are hard to find in boggy ground and long grass, and their position has been marked in different places on OS maps of different eras!

MAP

BLAKELEY RAISE Alt Name: **Kinniside**

Stone Circle | Nearest Village: **Ennerdale Bridge**
Map: **NY 0601 1403** | Sheets: **OL4 L89** | Lat: **54.51282N** | Long: **3.45329W**

A really lovely restored 11-stone circle with fabulous views. It's believed the stones from the original circle were taken in the 18th century by a local farmer to use as gateposts; the site was then restored, possibly inauthentically, in 1925 (although the stones used are said to be placed in the original holes). Whether it is a modern fake or not, the circle is charming and sits conveniently beside the road.

GREAT LANGDALE

Ancient Quarry | Nearest Village: **Great Langdale**
Map: **NY 2740 0720** | Sheets: **OL6 L90** | Lat: **54.45497N** | Long: **3.1213W**

Roughouts, rejects and worked debris from Neolithic axe industry have been found littering the scree slopes of Pike o' Stickle, fallen from quarries and an axe-factory cave high on the southern face of the fell. The beautiful axes of volcanic tuff greenstone (a narrow vein comes to the surface in Great Langdale) have been found all over Britain and Ireland; at least 15 in the Thames, for example, while in 2000 a greenstone axe, probably from Langdale, was uncovered in Doolin, County Clare. A steep path runs up to Pike o' Stickle;

accessing the cave itself would require a dangerous scramble down unstable scree. The site's inaccessibility raises the question why this rock in particular was seen as so important. Other sources of similar rock would have been easier to access, but were clearly less enticing. Perhaps the difficulty of acquiring it was significant. If you're lucky enough to spot one of the prehistoric roughouts, you should leave it in place as this is a site protected by law. Lots of examples of Langdale axes can be seen in Kendal Museum.

Photo © Mike Simon

Stone Axes

Leslie Phillips, long-standing member of the Megalithic Portal

The earliest stone tools used by the genus *Homo* were flaked to have a single edge. More complex tools, notably the bifacial flaked hand axe, followed. By the Neolithic (*c*. 4000–2200BC in Britain), the stone axe was characteristically a polished stone implement with a broad cutting edge. Size varied, and larger axes could be hafted. Axes were not only utilitarian but also played significant social and ceremonial roles: they were hoarded, discarded, accompanied burials and were ceremonially or ritually buried on their own.

British and Irish axes are categorized in groups based on source. There are around 30 groupings, of which arguably the most significant is Group VI, from the Great Langdale/Scafell Pike region (volcanic tuff). Axes from this area of the Lake District have been found throughout Britain, and in Ireland and the Isle of Man, accounting for approximately 25 per cent of analysed axe finds in those regions.

Other groups significant for their quantity or distribution include Group I/Ia (uralitized gabbro, epidiorite, or greenstone) originating from Cornwall, near Penzance. Their distribution is primarily in the south, east and Midlands, with some in Wales and Yorkshire. Group VII (augite granophyre) axes, from the Penmaenmawr area of North Wales, were distributed mostly in Wales and the Midlands, with concentrations in the Peak District and at Flamborough Head. Finds from Group XIII are not common, but they are of interest because, like the Stonehenge bluestones, they come from the Preseli Hills. Distribution is usually centred around the sources, however the Langdale axes (Group VI) appear to have been distributed from Humberside, while Group I may have had its main distribution area in the southeast.

The distribution of finds shows that axes were widely traded, with some theories suggesting they were exchanged for perishable items or livestock, but it is impossible to know whether they were traded directly and specifically, or whether distribution took place more slowly, via gift exchange. Causewayed enclosures may have played a part in this process, as gathering places and trading centres.

For thousands of years Alpine jade axes (“jade” here refers to jadeite,

jadetite and nephrite), originating from two areas in the Italian Alps, circulated widely throughout western Europe. The richest concentration of these is found in the Gulf of Morbihan in Brittany, and it is thought the large jade axes found in Britain and Ireland (approximately 130 examples) came from here. These are very highly polished, and so thin they would not be functional. It seems that jade axes were highly valued, functioning as prestige objects or used for ceremonial purposes. A prominent example is Britain's oldest jade axe, dating to 3200BC and found buried at the Sweet Track timber causeway in the Somerset Levels. Other notable sites that have produced axe finds include Carn Brea in Cornwall, Maiden Castle in Dorset and Cairn Holy 1 in Scotland.

CASTLERIGG Alt Name: **The Carles**

Stone Circle | Nearest Town: **Keswick**

Map: **NY 2913 2363** | Sheets: **OL4 L90** | Lat: **54.60284N** | Long: **3.09858W**

This is Cumbria's best-known stone circle, recorded by John Aubrey and William Stukeley and celebrated from the time of the Romantics (Keats, Coleridge and Ann Radcliffe all visited here) for its spectacular setting as much as for the magnificent stones themselves. Its accessiblity and popularity mean you're unlikely to get the site to yourself, but this is perhaps Britain's most dramatically sited circle, on a plateau surrounded by a perfect ring of mountains. To the south lie High Rigg and Helvellyn, to the north Skiddaw and Blencathra, to the west the Derwent Fells, and to the east, through a gap, the North Pennines can be seen. It's breathtaking. The circle itself is equally impressive, with 33 large stones still standing of the 38 that remain (there were originally 42). Ten more form a rectangular enclosure extending from the ring into the circle, a highly unusual feature that can only be compared to the Cockpit on Moor Divock (see page 181). This is one of the earliest circles in the UK, dating to the Neolithic rather than the Bronze Age. The stones are glacial erratics, generally about 1m (3ft 3in) tall, with those surrounding the "entrance" gap on the northern side rising to over 2m (6½ft). There are also two cairns inside the circle, as well as a low mound just inside the entrance. A stone 90m (295ft) southwest of the circle, by the wall, was moved to its present position in 1913 and may or may not be related to the circle. In the 1720s Stukeley mentioned a second circle to the west of Castlerigg (the area centred on NY 293 236),

although nothing seems to remain of this today.

GAMELANDS Alt Name: **Orton**

Stone Circle | Nearest Village: **Orton**
Map: **NY 6401 0816** | Sheets: **OL19 L91** | Lat: **54.46752N** | Long: **2.55678W**

An irregular 30m (98ft) circle of 43 pink granite boulders (except one of limestone), all of which have fallen or were perhaps deliberately set as recumbents. The stones, none longer than 0.9m (3ft), are set into a slight bank. Knott Scar dominates the northern horizon. A possible carving has been noted on top of a stone in the circle's northwest quadrant, and there may be an entrance to the south.

Photo © Richard Stroud

WHITE HAG

Stone Circle | Nearest Village: **Crosby Ravensworth**

Map: **NY 6074 1161** | Sheets: **OL19 L91** | Lat: **54.49828N** | Long: **2.60769W**

A small circle, about 6 × 5m (20 × 16ft), on open moorland, with sweeping views in all directions. There are 11 boulders in the circle, and an outlier stands 6.5m (21ft) to the southeast. There's a group of four smaller stones to the west.

Photo © Charles Paxton

"The outliers suggest this could be the surviving inner circle of a concentric circle similar to nearby Oddendale." John Miller

ODDENDALE

Stone Rows | Nearest Town: **Shap**
Map: **NY 5920 1291** | Sheets: **OL5 L91** | Lat: **54.50984N** | Long: **2.63165W**

This excellent double circle is made of pink Shap granite boulders, 34 in the

26.3m (86ft) outer ring and 23 in the inner, which forms the kerb of a small cairn. A group of outliers is located north of the outer circle.

"Two outlying red granite rocks look remarkably similar in shape to the Thunder Stone at Castlehowe Scar quarry." Anne Tate

IRON HILL

Stone Circle or Barrow | Nearest Village: **Hardendale**
Map: **NY 5963 1476** | Sheets: **OL5 L91** | Lat: **54.52704N** | Long: **2.62527W**

Along with Iron Hill South (see below), Iron Hill North is classified by Historic England (Pastscape) as a bowl barrow – this one being 9m (30ft) in diameter. A field wall has been built over the mound, restricting access to part of it. One of the 11 kerb stones is limestone while the rest are pink granite, and they're all about 0.3m (1ft) tall. Apparently seven further stones were removed in the 1980s.

Iron Hill South, also known as Harberwain and variously identified as a stone circle, cairn circle or bowl barrow, is at NY 5964 1477, just 50m (164ft) south of Iron Hill North. The 6m (20ft) diameter mound is lower than at Iron Hill North, and seven pink granite boulders of the kerb remain. Two similar stones lie to the southeast. Boulders on top of the mound may be the remains of a cist. Antiquarian excavation revealed part of a deer antler, animal bones and a male skeleton.

Photo © Anne Tate

MAP

SHAP

Multiple Stone Rows | Nearest Village: **Shap**
Map: **NY 5670 1380** | Sheets: **OL5 L90** | Lat: **54.51763N** | Long: **2.67039W**

There are a number of sites in and around Shap village. The best way to see these stones, which are in fields and field walls on most sides of the village, is to use the Megalithic Portal app, or else the map produced by the Shap Local History Society. They have identified 11 stone circles, seven burial mounds and a prehistoric settlement in the area, as well as the stones of a possible avenue.

SHAP AVENUE

The stones seem to form an arc that curves northwest from Kemp Howe stone circle (see below), running for *c*. 2.5km (1½ miles) through the village and

across the fields. It's easy to navigate from one stone to the next. The stones are mostly pink Shap granite, and some – the Thunder Stone and Goggleby Stone in particular – are probably glacial erratics. English Heritage records 14 stones, but there may be more. Many suspiciously large stones are embedded in walls or stand in gardens and fields. It's rumoured that stones from the avenue were used in the building of nearby Shap Abbey.

KEMP HOWE

If you are speeding north through Shap on the West Coast Main Line, look out for this sadly abused circle to the left of the railway (at NY 5676 1327). It's also right by the A6. Five or six large individual pink granite stones of this stone row remain in situ. There's some debate as to whether the other stones still exist beneath the tracks or were removed before the embankment was built. This circle is thought to have been the focus of Shap Avenue, along with a second circle at Carl Loft (now destroyed), on private land behind the Greyhound Hotel at the south end of the village.

GIANT'S FOOT (SHAP)

At NY 5630 1478, on the west side of Shap village, is this very large, flat-topped stone, one of the named Shap Avenue stones (also known as Barnkeld or the Drummer).

GOGGLEBY STONE

At NY 5592 1509, 500m (1,640ft) WNW of the Giant's Foot, is this very large and impressive standing stone (pictured, right), visible from miles around. Once you know it's there, you can see it from all kinds of places around the village.

ASPER'S FIELD STONE

In the field next to the Goggleby Stone is another stone in Shap Avenue (at NY 5584 1521, on private land). It has a cup-and-ring mark on the top.

THUNDER STONE (SHAP)

In a field south of the minor road running eastward from Shap to Crosby Ravensworth is the fabulous, very large glacial erratic (at NY 5515 1575) that's usually counted as the first (or last) major stone in Shap Avenue. It's on private land, so ask at the farm or view it from the road.

CASTLEHOWE SCAR

At NY 5875 1547, 3.6km (2¼ miles) east of Thunder Stone (Shap), is Castlehowe Scar, a neat 5m (16ft) circle nestling close to a dry-stone wall in a field. There are 10 pink granite stones and one of blue granite in this. At NY 5818 1561, 590m (1,938ft) west of the stone circle, is another Thunder Stone!

GUNNERKELD

Stone Circle | Nearest Village: **Shap**
Map: **NY 5682 1775** | Sheets: **OL5 L90** | Lat: **54.55314N** | Long: **2.66911W**

This rather ruinous concentric circle is right next to the M6 motorway and indeed visible from the southbound carriageway. Three stones remain upright in the 30 × 24m (98 × 78ft) outer circle of 19 large granite stones, two of these uprights forming the entrance on the north side. The inner circle, forming the kerb of a cairn, is around 18 × 16m (59ft × 52ft), with 31 stones. On private land, so seek permission at the farm.

MAP

MOOR DIVOCK

Megalithic Complex | Nearest Village: **Askham**
Map: **NY 4828 2224** | Sheets: **OL5 L90** | Lat: **54.59268N** | Long: **2.80193W**

Moor Divock is a remarkable prehistoric landscape, littered with cairns, stone circles, standing stones and other monuments. This is a great place to wander round and see what you can spot.

THE COCKPIT

At a junction of several tracks (at NY 4828 2224), the Cockpit stands on the edge of a natural terrace with wonderful views over Ullswater and to the Derwent Fells. This is a large kerb cairn or a stone circle, oval in shape and measuring 27.4 × 31.6m (90 × 104ft), set into a low stone bank. There were two concentric settings of stones, but the outer ring is hard to make out. The tallest stone still standing measures about 0.9m (3ft) and some of the fallen stones extend to 1.8m (6ft). The 5m (16ft) square setting on the eastern side of the circle is a rare formation, possibly original to the circle, which has been compared to the rectangular feature at Castlerigg (see page 177).

Photo © Christopher Bickerton

COP STONE

At NY 4959 2160, 1.5km (just under 1 mile) ESE of the Cockpit, the impressive

Cop Stone is right on the track that leads up across Divock Moor. It's a large, unworked stone (1.7 × 1.2m/5ft 6in × 4ft) forming part of the southwestern boundary of a ring cairn 17m (57ft) in diameter. The cairn's bank can be identified, as well as four more stones protruding by around 0.3m (1ft) from the bank. Records from the 19th century show the bank was continuous at that time, with over 10 recumbent stones in place.

MOOR DIVOCK 4

At NY 4940 2197, next to the track and 415m (1,362ft) northwest of the Cop Stone, is Moor Divock 4, a 10m (33ft) ring cairn, with a mound of turf-covered stones surrounded by a ring of 10 uprights (a further four stones are just southeast of the cairn). An urn, along with a cremation, was found here in the 19th century. From here, the Cop Stone is visible, framed between two standing stones.

MOOR DIVOCK 3

At NY 4931 2219, around 230m (750ft) northwest from Moor Divock 4, a little way east of the track, is a 17 × 15m (56 × 49ft) cairn circle with three large upright stones, plus some on the ground. The stones are around 1.5m (5ft) high. An urn and cremation were found here, too.

WHITE RAISE CAIRN

Around 500m (1,640ft) WNW of Moor Divock 3, further along the track and close to the junction with the path leading west to the Cockpit, this large oval cairn (at NY 4889 2242) is close to the path on its eastern side but can still be tricky to find, requiring a plunge through the bracken! It's about 22m (72ft) long and the central cist is exposed, along with the displaced capstone.

MAYBURGH

Henge or Banked Enclosure | Nearest Village: **Eamont Bridge**
Map: **NY 5192 2843** | Sheets: **OL5 L90** | Lat: **54.64865N** | Long: **2.74667W**

Not even the immediate proximity of the M6 can ruin the atmosphere in this massive banked enclosure. The huge bank, made of river-weathered stones, is

still 7.3m (24ft) high in places and 45m (147ft) wide, and surrounds a 90m (295ft) enclosure. There is an entrance to the east. One standing stone remains in the centre; originally there were four, with four more at the entrance (these were destroyed in 1720). William Stukeley suggested there may have been two concentric stone circles within the henge, but there is no evidence for this. The height of the bank gives a very particular sense of being enclosed within the site. A great place to break a journey on the M6.

Nearby | At NY 5232 2837, just over 400m (1,312ft) east of Mayburgh, is **King Arthur's Round Table**. The Victorians may have attempted to turn this henge into pleasure gardens, and the road cuts into it, but still it survives, around 90m (295ft) in diameter. With a bank and an internal ditch, it fits the henge definition more neatly than Mayburgh. Two stones once stood outside the northern entrance (now beneath the road), and there was also another henge, known as the Little Round Table, some 200m (656ft) to the southeast. This is now covered by modern development and barely visible (a shallow ditch can be seen at NY 5238 2817).

At NY 5097 2875, about 1km (0.6 miles) west of Mayburgh, is the 1.8m (6ft) **Skirsgill** standing stone, now hidden among bushes outside a gym in a car park in an industrial estate.

CLIFTON STONES

Standing Stones | Nearest Village: **Clifton**
Map: **NY 5313 2593** | Sheets: **OL5 L90** | Lat: **54.62631N** | Long: **2.72747W**

Two Bronze Age standing stones, which lean, with pleasing symmetry, in opposite directions. A third was uncovered during excavation in 1977, along with a small cairn over the remains of several cremations. A lane leads to the field, but they are on private land.

"In the corner of the field lies a very large misshapen stone. Could it be 'The Hag', as mentioned on the OS map?" Nicola Didsbury

Photo © Nicola Didsbury

MAP

LONG MEG AND HER DAUGHTERS

Stone Circle | Nearest Village: **Little Salkeld**
Map: **NY 5711 3721** | Sheets: **OL5 L91** | Lat: **54.72803N** | Long: **2.66749W**

The third-largest stone circle in England, after Avebury and Stanton Drew, Long Meg and Her Daughters is a flattened oval measuring some 110 × 93m (360 × 305ft). There are 69 stones remaining, of which 27 still stand, and the circle has two “entrances”, to the northwest and southwest. A large enclosure to the north (visible in aerial photography) meets the flattened northern segment of the circle. A farm track driven through the circle doesn’t detract from the atmosphere, and neither do the cows that are frequently present.

The story goes that the outlier and circle are 13th-century witch Meg Meldon and her coven, all turned to stone during a sabbat by Michael Scot, a wizard from over the border. As at many sites, these stones are said to be uncountable;

if you manage to count them twice and get the same result, Michael Scot's spell will be broken, or alternatively you will be able to hear Long Meg whisper. There's a story that an attempt to blow up the circle in the 18th century was foiled by a violent storm that frightened off the would-be destroyers.

Photo © Shaun (Stonesy) Bunting

LONG MEG

At NY 5706 3716, some 22m (72ft) southwest of the southwestern circle entrance, stands Long Meg herself – all 3.6m (11ft 9in) of her. She's an impressive red sandstone pillar with rock art, including grooves, spirals and rings, carved into one side. Aubrey Burl points out that this stone, when viewed from the centre of the circle, stands in line with two portal stones at the southwest entrance and with the midwinter sunset. If this stone is ever broken, the legend goes, it will run with blood.

LITTLE MEG Alt Name: **Maughanby**

Kerb Cairn | Nearest Village: **Little Salkeld**

Map: **NY 5770 3748** | Sheets: **OL5 L91** | Lat: **54.73050N** | Long: **2.65853W**

Little Meg's 11 stones, most fallen, encircle a central cairn that once covered a cist containing an urn with a cremation. There are spirals and cup-andring marks on two of the stones (another decorated stone is at the Tullie House Museum in Carlisle). On private land but visible from the field gate.

"One or two of the larger stones might be in their original positions, but most have been moved to plough the land. Still worth a visit, with a welcoming ambience." Nicola Didsbury

Jack Morris-Eyton's Shadow Theory

David Smyth, who spent two years researching Jack's work

Before his death in 2011, Jack Morris-Eyton, retired farmer and regular contributor to the Megalithic Portal, spent 18 years developing a theory about the interaction of light and shadows at stone circles and other monuments. With particular reference to Swinside, Castlerigg, Long Meg and Her Daughters, and Stonehenge, he devised a system to demonstrate how these monuments were used as "prediction calendars".

His research began when he noticed the shadows cast by some stones seemed to have a purpose in an overall design. Small boulders on exposed ridges cast long shadows to the valley below, intersecting with horizontal ground shadows. It also appeared that shadows crossed target stones at certain times of the day or year, and stones often seemed to have views to features on the horizon, such as notches, hills or barrows, at precise sun or moon rising or setting points. For example, at Long Meg, the shadow from Long Meg herself falls right across the circle to Stone 1 at midwinter sunset. At the equinoxes and crossquarter days, the shadow reaches other stones in the circle.

Jack used a computer programme to tell him the azimuth and elevation of a celestial event on the horizon. The azimuth is the angle between a celestial body and north, measured clockwise around the observer's horizon. The elevation is the vertical angular distance between a celestial body and the observer's horizon. Together they define the position of a celestial body in the sky, viewed from a particular place, at a particular time. If, for instance, it was a lunar event, he would take bearings from the stones he identified as "moon stones" and note which other stones in the circle, or what feature on the horizon, were associated with it. This process was repeated for solstices and equinoxes. He discovered there were key positions at some sites – either pointer stones or pairs of stones, from which the whole year's calendar could be seen. He also found stones marking what he called "invisible" events – points where the sun or moon rose or set that were hidden behind intervening hills.

For more information, see: www.megalithic.co.uk/downloads/JackME_Final.pdf

County Durham

MAP

BARNINGHAM MOOR

Rock Art | Nearest Village: **Barningham**
Map: **NZ 0547 0881** | Sheets: **OL30 L92** | Lat: **54.4746N** | Long: **1.91714W**

BARNINGHAM MOOR 20

The Barningham Moor rock art (see map, page 166) is on open-access land, but managed for grouse so March to August (nesting season) should be avoided. Of the many rock art stones in the area, the most complex and striking is Barningham Moor 20 (at NZ 0547 0881, pictured opposite). The carvings include one cup with four rings, six cups in a line and serpentine grooves connecting cups. Packing stones indicate this stone may have originally been upright.

BARNINGHAM MOOR 100

At NZ 0596 0840, some 634m (2,080ft) ESE of Barningham Moor 20, is Barningham Moor 100, a squarish boulder with cupmarks, including some with grooves and penannulars. The more finely carved motifs are much more weathered than the crudely carved motifs; this may result from turf protection or having been carved at different times.

Photo © Cezary Namirski

OTHER BARNINGHAM MOOR SITES

As the number of Barningham Moor 100 suggests, there's a lot of rock art in this area. Other recommended sites nearby are: Barningham Moor 101 (NZ 0596 0838), Barningham Moor 127 (NZ 0488 0823), Barningham Moor 13 (NZ 0499 0885), Barningham Moor 23 (NZ 0528 0917), Barningham Moor 24 (NZ 0444 0830), Barningham Moor 52 (NZ 0563 0831), Barningham Moor 58 (NZ 0523 0767), and Barningham Moor 6 (NZ 0456 0856). See the Megalithic Portal for further information.

SIMONBURN

Alt Names: **Davy's Lee, King's Crag, Haughton Common**
Stone Circle | Nearest Village: **Simonburn**
Map: **NY 8021 7120** | Sheets: **OL43 L87** | Lat: **55.03493N** | Long: **2.3111W**

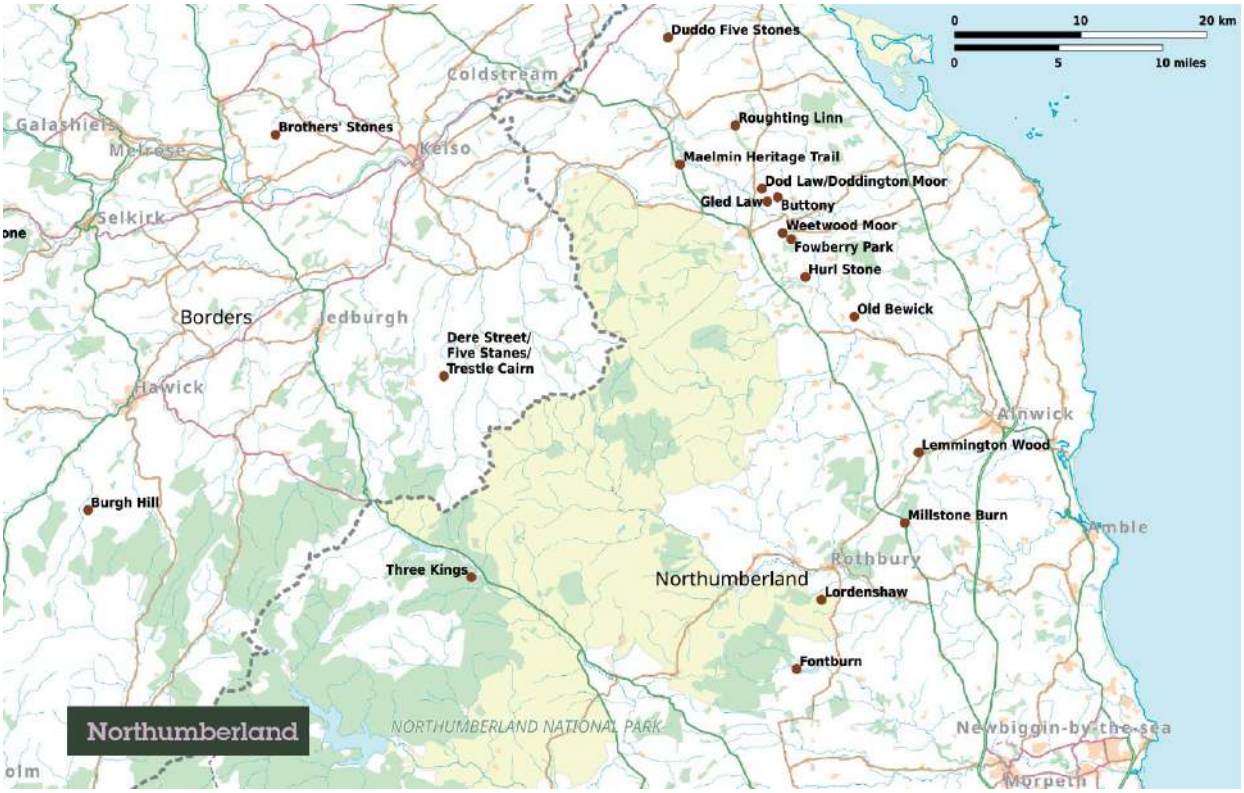
On moorland pasture, this attractive 9m (30ft) circle has 11 visible stones, the tallest of which, an L-shaped "chair", reaches 1m (3ft 3in). Several have

cupmarks. Close by are cairns, rock art stones, settlements, enclosures, ancient boundaries and banks, and cist burials – a real treat. The best access (although very boggy in parts) is from the B6318 (Military Road), across the vallum of Hadrian's Wall and past Sewingshields Farm. If you want a dry route, stick to the farm track until you reach the wood just south of Folly Lake, then turn left.

Nearby | At NY 8054 7134, around 350m (1,150ft) east of Simonburn, is the possibly Bronze Age **Davy's Lee** enclosure, a reasonably well-defined curvilinear bank and what may be a burial cairn. Just beyond the southeastern edge of the enclosure is Davy's Lee rock art boulder (at NY 8067 7132), sitting in isolation on a gentle slope. Natural fissures delineate several parts, within which are 12 cupmarks of varying size and shape, some of which may be natural. The enclosure is on private land, although it butts up to the surrounding access land.

At NY 7971 7042, around 1km (0.6 miles) southwest of Simonburn, are the two recently discovered **Queen's Crags** cupmarked boulders, within 60m (196ft) of each other. The smaller has five cupmarks, and the larger has cupmarks and slots from quarrying.

Northumberland



FONTBURN Alt Names: **Fontburn Dod, Fontburn Reservoir Stone Circle** | Nearest Town: **Morpeth**
Map: **NZ 0325 9364** | Sheets: **OL42 L81** | Lat: **55.237N** | Long: **1.95037W**

A cute little four-poster on private land just to the north of the western end of Fontburn Reservoir and around 600m (1,968ft) SSW of Newbiggin Farm. The stones are small (up to 1m/3ft 3in) and two of them have cupmarks. Online archaeology data service England's Rock Art says: "Ironstone banding and surface cover on two sides is interesting and may have influenced selection for use within a monument." This site is just off a permissive footpath that runs around Fontburn Reservoir. Look out for red squirrels in the area.

Nearby | At NZ 0328 933, 270m (885ft) south of the four-poster, **Fontburn B** is a massive glacial boulder to be found next to a small burn that runs into the western end of Fontburn Reservoir. Its flattish top is decorated with more than 50 cups, cup-and-rings and cup-and-grooves. Motifs on the side may have been lost to quarrying. This impressive boulder can be reached by following the walk along the south side of Fontburn Reservoir then taking the gate on to access land and following the fence line.

"Fontburn four-poster is almost the twin of Hafodygors Wen, over in North Wales." Paul Bladesury

THREE KINGS

Stone Circle | Nearest Village: **Byrness**
Map: **NT 7743 0092** | Sheets: **OL16 L80** | Lat: **55.30185N** | Long: **2.35704W**

A charming little four-poster circle with one fallen stone, set in a clearing in Kielder Forest. The stones measure around 1.4m (4½ft) in height, and there's a

cist in the middle, which held a cremation burial.

Photo © Christopher Bickerton

Nearby | At NT 8132 0117, 4km (2½ miles) east of the Three Kings, **Bellshiel Law** is a chambered long cairn located in a military training area on the Otterburn Ranges (search online for access times). The 109m (357ft) cairn more or less doubles in width from 8.8m (29ft) at the west to 15m (49ft) at the east end. It's mostly bare stone with some turf to the north. The enclosure to the south is a later feature, built using stone from the cairn. There are six cairns about 150m (490ft) to the southeast, which are hard to find when the grass is long.

"The name Three Kings is from a local legend that this was the grave of three kings of Denmark who were killed in battle." Ewen Rennie

LORDENSHAW

Rock Art | Nearest Town: **Rothbury**
Map: **NZ 0522 9915** | Sheets: **OL42 L81** | Lat: **55.28644N** | Long: **1.91931W**

WEST LORDENSHAW MAIN ROCK

Also known as West Lordenshaw 2c, this is a huge piece of rock at NZ 0522 9915 that really stands out on the moorland. This superb example of prehistoric art has 100 motifs surviving on its surfaces, despite having been quarried. It forms the start of a walking trail that takes in an Iron Age hill fort and other rock art sites. Use the Rock Art on Mobile Phones resource (rockartmob.ncl.ac.uk) for directions and information.

Photo © Cezary Namirski

Prehistoric Rock Art in Britain and Ireland

Cezary Namirski has a PhD in archaeology from Durham University

The first publications about British petroglyphs date back to the 19th century, but it's only since the 1960s, with the work of Stan Beckensall in England and Donald Morris in Scotland, that they've been studied in any real depth. Morris and Beckensall's monumental efforts to record the sites, as well as the contributions of K.J.S. Boughey and E.A. Vickerman on West Yorkshire, remain the basis of our knowledge about the distribution of British rock art. New panels are regularly discovered, even in areas that have been previously surveyed. Many decorated rock surfaces lie concealed by the turf, which in some cases has contributed to the survival of actual toolmarks.

British and Irish rock art shares many characteristics with that of Spain and Portugal, as part of the wider horizon of Neolithic and early Bronze Age petroglyphs in Atlantic Europe. However, generally in Britain and Ireland the designs are limited to abstract motifs, with cupmarks and cup-and-ring marks (with up to nine or 10 rings) constituting the vast majority of examples, often accompanied by channels or grooves, sometimes by spirals, and very rarely subrectangular designs. The oldest recorded archaeological context for a cupmarked stone comes from the early Neolithic long barrow at Dalladies (Aberdeenshire), while one of the latest is the early Bronze Age cairn at Chatton Sandyford (Northumberland), indicating that the cup-and-ring mark tradition lasted about two millennia. It is distinct from the megalithic art tradition known from the passage tombs of Ireland and Wales.

The main concentrations of rock art can be found in the northeast of England (North and West Yorkshire and Northumberland), western Scotland (Argyll and Galloway), and some areas of Ireland (County Donegal and South Leinster). Despite an overall homogeneity in style, regional patterns can be observed – for example, the rosette motifs at sites around Wooler in Northumberland (the Ringses, Buttony and Hare Law Crags). Most motifs are located on outcrops and boulders in the

landscape, but they can also be found on monuments (Matfen in Northumberland and Long Meg in Cumbria), cairns and cist burials (the cist cover from Witton Gilbert in County Durham). Clive Waddington (1998) interprets this as evidence for chronological changes in distribution and use – according to his model the motifs were first carved on outcrops and boulders in the landscape in the Neolithic, and gradually moved to monuments and burials.

Excavations around some of the major rock art panels have proved that they were not created in isolation. For example, adjacent to the cup-and-ring marked Tiger Rock (at Kilmartin Glen in Argyll), remains of a late Neolithic post or stake circle, as well as a clay platform of similar date were discovered (Jones *et al.* 2011); and at Hunterheugh in Northumberland, a cairn that covered some of the motifs was excavated.

Find out more at England's Rock Art: archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/era/

EAST LORDENSHAW CHANNEL ROCK

At NZ 0569 9939, northeast of the hill fort, is East Lordenshaw Channel Rock East, also known as Lordenshaw 4b. This large rock has cupmarks, bowls and the longest carved channel in Northumberland (perhaps even in the UK).

"On the slope edge among other outcrops, Channel Rock is difficult to spot at first, but the minute you see the cupmarks, it really stands out." Anne Tate

LORDENSHAW HORSESHOE ROCK

At NZ 0510 9922, 143m (469ft) WNW of the Main Rock, this rock originally formed the base of a Bronze Age cairn; now all that remains is this highly decorated rock, which takes its name from the rare horseshoe-shaped grooves containing cups. It sits on a 40 degree slope and has 360 degree views.

OTHER LORDENSHAW SITES

There are over 120 panels at Lordenshaw (although some, mainly in West Lordenshaw, are on private land). Other recommended sites in the area are: West Lordenshaw 2d (NZ 0536 9929), East Lordenshaw 3q (NZ 0566 9935), East

Lordenshaw 4e (NZ 0567 9940), East Lordenshaw 4f (east) (NZ 0567 9940) and East Lordenshaw 4g (NZ 0560 9939). See the Megalithic Portal for further information.

MAP

MILLSTONE BURN

Rock Art | Nearest Village: **Edlingham**
Map: **NU 1184 0524** | Sheets: **E332 L81** | Lat: **55.34104N** | Long: **1.81492W**

MILLSTONE BURN 2H

There’s a fantastic range of rock art at Millstone Burn, with 2h (on open-access land, at NU 1184 0524) the best and most complex example; it has three large motifs, two made up of cup-andtwo-rings and descending grooves, creating stemmed or flower-like images. As with other moorland rock art sites, the Millstone Burn carvings are most easily found in late autumn, winter and early spring, before the bracken gets too deep. Some carvings may become covered in turf.

Photo © Cezary Namirski

MILLSTONE BURN 1A

At NU 1189 0520, 63m (206ft) ESE of Millstone Burn 2h, on open-access land just east of the A697. An outcrop or earthfast boulder set into the hillside, partially covered in moss and turf, this stone has a large, deep cup with three rings and a groove, and a smaller cupmark with no rings.

MILLSTONE BURN 1B

At NU 1188 0510, 100m (328ft) SSE of Millstone Burn 2h, is this carved stone, sited east of the A697 and on private land right by the roadside fence, through which it can be viewed. It features a rare oculus carving with two cupmarks (like a figure of eight or a pair of eyes), which may be mossed over.

OTHER MILLSTONE BURN SITES

Other recommended rock art sites in the area are: Millstone Burn 1c (NU 1187 0508), Millstone Burn 1g (NU 1190 0514), Millstone Burn 2g (NU 1186 0522), Millstone Burn 3a (NU 1164 0523), Millstone Burn 3e(i) (NU 1172 0528), Millstone Burn 4a (NU 1151 0516), Millstone Burn 4b (NU 1152 0517), Millstone Burn 5a (NU 1142 0517), Millstone Burn 6b (NU 1129 0519), Millstone Burn 6c(ii) (NU 1134 0522), and Millstone Burn 6d (NU 1136 0521). See the Megalithic Portal for further information.

LEMMINGTON WOOD

Rock Art | Nearest Village: **Edlingham**
Map: **NU 1293 1078** | Sheets: **E332 L81** | Lat: **55.39080N** | Long: **1.79742W**

This rock outcrop features not just cup-and-ring marks, but also the only runic inscription in the Northumberland landscape – it's believed to mean "relics" or "leave behind".

Nearby | At NU 1279 0962, 1.2km (¾ mile) south of Lemmington Wood, is **Corby Crags** rock shelter, a partly quarried outcrop with ledges and seating inside. A tool-cut groove inside the cave led to a triangular stone that covered a cremation burial within an early Bronze Age food vessel. There are rock art panels near the shelter.

"GPS may be needed to locate the rock, as it is in a dip and often hidden by bushes. The site is in a private wood, but there are paths through it, used by dog walkers." Anne Tate

OLD BEWICK

Rock Art | Nearest Village: **Old Bewick**
Map: **NU 0782 2157** | Sheets: **E332 L75** | Lat: **55.48793N** | Long: **1.87772W**

There are numerous rock art stones, in addition to those described here, to discover in this location, as well as an Iron Age hill fort with its huge earth ramparts and great views.

OLD BEWICK 1A

On this large rock outcrop at NU 0783 2158, overlooking Corby Crags hill fort, Hepburn Ridge and the cairns at Blawearie, is a complex panel covered on the top and two sides by many individual and interlinking rock art motifs, some of which are unique to this stone (including a figure of eight). Natural features have also been worked into the design. Some motifs may have been lost to quarrying.

OLD BEWICK 2

At NU 0776 2155, 70m (230ft) WSW of Old Bewick 1a, and over the fence from its companion, this is a slightly smaller outcrop with cup-and-ring marks, including an interesting cup with duct-and-ring motif countersunk within a bowl. Again, some motifs may have been destroyed by quarrying.

OLD BEWICK 3A

At NU 0772 2158, 56m (184ft) WNW of Old Bewick 2, this boulder is partly embedded in the ruins of an old stone wall. It is decorated with cups, rings and other finely carved motifs, including an unusual (quite worn) foot-shaped groove or reniform (a rectangle with rounded, narrow ends like a kidney).

MAP

HURL STONE

Standing Stone | Nearest Village: **Newtown**
Map: **NU 0395 2471** | Sheets: **E340 L75** | Lat: **55.51613N** | Long: **1.939W**

So named because the Devil hurled a stone at St Cuthbert on Ros Castle Hill and – as usual – missed, this thin, 3m (10ft) stone may be a relocated prehistoric standing stone or, alternatively, a headless Anglian cross-shaft. After being struck by lightning in the mid-19th century, it was mounted on a concrete plinth. Local tradition says there's a tunnel beneath it, linking two caves. The story goes that explorers who dared enter the tunnel, on reaching the part directly under the stone, found their lights extinguished and heard fairy voices singing a rhyme, causing them to flee in terror. Seek permission from the owners of Lilburn Tower to see it close up, or view it from the road.

Photo © Anne Tate

Nearby | At NU 0432 2421, 621m (2,037ft) southeast of the Hurl Stone and fenced in on private land at the base of Ewe Hill, is **Newtown Mill**, a well-worn 1.2m (4ft) tall standing stone. The vertical fluting on its top (caused by weathering) says it is far older than the the Devil's Causeway Roman road by which it stands. Two cupmarks linked by a groove have been reported on its south face and a single cup on the north, but these may just be natural.

FOWBERRY PARK

Rock Art | Nearest Village: **Wooler**
Map: **NU 0287 2765** | Sheets: **E340 L75** | Lat: **55.54317N** | Long: **1.95697W**

Fowberry Park consists of eight panels on a sloping, quarried outcrop. The most striking is Fowberry Park b (at NU 0287 2765): two parallel rows of 48 small cupmarks, average diameter 2cm (less than 1in). Stan Beckensall, the expert on Northumbrian rock art, says, “there is nothing like this anywhere else.”

Photo © Anne Tate

WEETWOOD MOOR

Rock Art | Nearest Town: **Wooler**
Map: **NU 0222 2821** | Sheets: **E340 L75** | Lat: **55.547456N** | Long: **1.966278W**

There used to be a pleasant walk linking rock art sites on Weetwood Moor, but it is now on private property and the trail is overgrown. Seek permission before visiting.

BICYCLE ROCK

Also known as Weetwood Moor 3a, this is the old walk's first site, at NU 0222 2821. It is carved with six distinctive, large penannulars (incomplete circles), some linked by grooves.

GORSEBUSH ROCK

Also known as Weetwood Moor 5a, this site at NU 0215 2821 is 73m (240ft) WNW of Bicycle Rock. There are four sets of penannular rings and various cupmarks.

PLANTATION ROCK

At NU 0197 2831, 193m (633ft) WNW of Gorsebush Rock, this is the last site on the trail, also known as Weetwood Moor 6a. It has two large motifs of cups-and-rings, and two smaller ones. Other recommended sites in the area are: Weetwood Moor 1a (NU 0233 2822), Weetwood Moor 2c (NU 0226 2821) and Weetwood Moor 7 (NU 0227 2815). See the Megalithic Portal for further information.

BUTTONY

Rock Art | Nearest Town: **Wooler**
Map: **NU 0174 3104** | Sheets: **E340 L75** | Lat: **55.57302N** | Long: **1.97404W**

BUTTONY 4

At NU 0174 3104, this is a really impressive pair of conjoined cup-and-ring motifs. One is a cup with seven complete rings, the other has eight. This rock also has six cups arranged in domino fashion. The Buttony sites are in an atmospheric forest setting on private land, so seek permission before visiting.

BUTTONY 1C

At NU 0173 3103, just 10m (33ft) WSW of Buttony 4, is Buttony 1c, with four concentric ring motifs, linked by serpentine grooves, forming a frieze extending 2m (6½ft) over the side of the rock. These motifs lie close to the ground and may be buried under pine needles and tree roots.

BUTTONY 3

At NU 0174 3104, 12m (39ft) ENE of Buttony 1c, Buttony 3 has a number of complex motifs including a rare rosette of four cups at the centre of seven broken rings. Another cup is surrounded by five

BUTTONY 5

At NU 0173 3106, 24m (79ft) NNE of Buttony 1c, this carving features a rare rosette motif with eight cups, and the beginnings of another. There are also two keyhole motifs, worn but still visible, and now protected by pine needles and earth.

Nearby | Around 600m (1,968ft) ENE of the Buttony sites, **West Horton** has another great collection of inscribed rocks (on private land, so seek permission). The sloping bedrock outcrop known as West Horton 1a (at NU 0214 3149) contains cups, grooves and arcs, including a pattern of three cups that echoes the oculus of the motif beside it. Three other motifs form an umbrella effect. Other recommended sites in the area include: West Horton 1b (NU 0215 3156), West Horton 1f (NU 0231 3136), West Horton 2a (NU 0215 3155) and West Horton 2b (NU 0215 3155).

MAP

GLED LAW

Rock Art | Nearest Village: **Doddington**
Map: **NU 0092 3070** | Sheets: **E340 L75** | Lat: **55.56995N** | Long: **1.98695W**

GLED LAW 2A

Gled Law is a continuation of the Dod Law scarp, with views across the Till valley and much rock art. On private land at NU 0092 3070, Gled Law 2a has two splendid sets of cup-and-rings, one over 1m (3ft 3in) and sharing the largest number of concentric rings (eight) in Northumberland with Buttony 4; the arc of a ninth ring is visible, along with grooves radiating from the centre. The weathered adjoining motif has six radiating grooves.

Photo © Cezary Namirski

GLED LAW 1

At NU 0106 3066, 144m (473ft) east from Gled Law 2a, this smaller panel features two cups, both with unaligned penannulars (incomplete circles). The eastern motif is in better condition. Note that the site is likely to be covered in turf in summer. Other recommended sites in the area include: Gled Law 2c (NU 0090 5303), Gled Law 2d (NU 0090 3071), Gled Law 2e (NU 0089 3071), Gled Law 2f (NU 0089 3071) and Gled Law 3 (NU 0121 3087). See the Megalithic Portal for further information.

DOD LAW

Rock Art | Nearest Village: **Doddington**
Map: **NU 0050 3172** | Sheets: **E340 L75** | Lat: **55.57913N** | Long: **1.9937W**

East of Dod Law West hill fort is Dod Law Main Rock, an impressive, exposed slab of rock with some unique motifs and, as a bonus, great views across to the Cheviots. The flat surface of this stone has been split into "zones" by curvilinear grooves; the "double boxes" or rectangular grooves enclosing some of the cupmarks are really unusual, and worth the walk!

MAELMIN HERITAGE TRAIL Alt Name: **Milfield Henge**

Reconstructed Henge & Timber Circle | Nearest Village: **Milfield**
Map: **NT 9400 3363** | Sheets: **E339 L75** | Lat: **55.59626N** | Long: **2.09677W**

Near the modern village of Milfield, in the Till valley, was the important Anglo-Saxon royal township of Maelmin. The Till valley is a landscape rich in archaeological heritage, containing a complex of eight henges, some 4,000 years old (possibly forming a processional way), together with other Neolithic and early Bronze Age stone circles, standing stones and burial cairns. Maelmin Heritage has reconstructed one of the wooden henges, which was originally located in a nearby field and found to contain Anglo-Saxon burials. The henge and a reconstructed early medieval house are linked by a 600m (1,968ft) walking trail.

Photo © Iain Murray

ROUGHTING LINN

Rock Art | Nearest Village: **Ford**
Map: **NT 9839 3673** | Sheets: **E339 L75** | Lat: **55.62416N** | Long: **2.02714W**

Described as “one of the most important pieces of rock art in the world” by Stan Beckensall, Roughting Linn is the largest and probably best-known set of prehistoric carvings in the north of England. As it is a Historic England site, it is signposted from the road. The art is carved into a huge dome of sandstone, about 18m (59ft) long, with designs across three sections. The motifs are mostly cup-and-rings, some of which are very deeply cut. In close proximity to the rock art panel is a well-preserved Iron Age promontory fort with up to five impressive ramparts; although covered in trees, its banks and ditches are well defined. A wonderful and impressive site.

Nearby | 1.6km (1 mile) or so WNW of Roughting Linn is another large dome of rock around which are further carved outcrops. At **Broomridge 2** (at

NT 9704 3705) there is a set of cups and cup-andrings, one with seven rings, the rings being made up by angular lines joined together. At its east end, there are also some circular markings made during the excavation of millstones.

At NT 9771 3702, 669m (just under ½ mile) east of Broomridge 2, is **Goatscrag rock shelter**, with rare deer carvings. Experts are unable to agree as to whether they are prehistoric or not. These rock overhangs were used for shelter and as burial places – if the carvings are contemporary with the burials, they are unique in Britain.

"At the time of our visit, the paths were sufficiently well maintained for wheelchair access." Anne Tate

DODDINGTON MOOR

Stone Circle | Nearest Village: **Doddington**
Map: **NU 0131 3172** | Sheets: **Sheet E340 L75** | Lat: **55.579132N** | Long: **1.980781W**

Up on Doddington Moor (just 800m/½ mile east of Dod Law), only one stone remains upright of this five-stone circle; the other stones are fallen. The footpaths appear to have changed, so GPS will be helpful.

Photo © Cezary Namirski

Nearby | At **Hare Law Crags**, north of Doddington Moor, there are four rock art boulders in the same vicinity. Hare Law Crags 1.3 (at NU 0137 3543) includes two unusual variations on the cup-and-ring theme: a large rosette motif and an oculus (two cups surrounded by two concentric circles). On private land.

MAP

DUDDO FIVE STONES Alt Name: **Singing Stones**

Stone Circle | Nearest Village: **Duddo**
Map: **NU 9306 4301** | Sheets: **E339 L75** | Lat: **55.68672N** | Long: **2.1121W**

Stan Beckensall describes Duddo as “one of the most attractive monuments in Britain”. This circle of five beautifully grooved, large sandstone stones has a lovely hilltop setting. One of the stones was reerected in the 1920s, and the others have all probably been moved or reerected at some point (there were originally six of them). There are various legends associated with Duddo, one

being that the stones were erected as recently as 1558 to commemorate the victory of the Earl of Northumberland at Grindon over a party of marrauding Scots. Another story relates how these are all that remains of five men turned to stone for digging up turnips on the Sabbath. The indignity of being petrified caused the men's leader to collapse in shock; this is the stone that was put up again in the 1920s. On private land, with access at the landowner's discretion.

Photo © Dave Head

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